



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2020 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

KOINONIA

The Princeton Theological Seminary Graduate Forum

CONTENTS

On Bended Knee

RICHARD J. BAUTCH 155

Use of the Theory of Relativity in Theological
Arguments about the Nature of God

TOMÁŠ HANČIL 168

John Calvin, Huguenot?

GALEN JOHNSON 194

"What Ought We To Do?"

SCOTT PAETH 216

Whole Persons and Whole Communities

JAMES F. THOMAS 237

The Popular Church in Brazil

JOSEPH C. SANDS 260

BOOK REVIEWS 267

Volume XI.2
Fall 1999

ISSN 1047 - 1057

KOINONIA JOURNAL is published by doctoral students under the auspices of Princeton Theological Seminary and is intended to promote interdisciplinary discussion and exploration of new and emerging issues in the study of religion. The journal is published twice a year. Contributions are welcome: style specifications are available over the internet at <http://www.ptsem.edu/koinonia>. Correspondence and subscription orders should be addressed to *KOINONIA JOURNAL*, Princeton Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 821, Princeton, NJ 08542-0803. Subscriptions and submissions may also be sent via the Internet to KOINONIA@PTSEM.EDU.

KOINONIA is indexed in *Religion Index One: Periodicals*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 820 Church Street, Suite 300, Evanston, IL 60201. Book reviews are indexed in *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*. These indexes are part of ATLA Religion Database, available on CD-ROM from ATLA and also on-line via Dialog Information Services.



The paper used in this publication is acid-free and meets the minimum requirement of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48–1984

Christopher S. D. Rogers, *Executive Editor*

Scott R. Paeth, *Production Editor*

Haruko Ward and Joe Coker, *History Editors*

Arun W. Jones, *Mission, Ecumenics and History of Religions Editor*

Matthew Skinner, *New Testament Editor*

Bryan Bibb, *Old Testament Editor*

Allan H. Cole Jr., *Practical Theology Editor*

Dieter Heinzl and Rachel Baard, *Theology Editors*

Thomas S. Bremer, *Editor-at-Large*

KOINONIA

The Princeton Theological Seminary
Graduate Forum

Volume XI.2

Fall 1999

Volume XI.2 • FALL 1999

KOINONIA

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL		IX
On Bended Knee	RICHARD J. BAUTCH	155
Use of the Theory of Relativity in Theological Arguments about the Nature of God	TOMÁŠ HANČIL	168
John Calvin, Huguenot?	GALEN JOHNSON	194
"What Ought We To Do?" Normativity in Barth's Ethics of Creation	SCOTT PAETH	216
Whole Persons and Whole Communities: A Christian Ethics of Tears and Transcendence in the Context of AIDS in Thailand	JAMES F. THOMAS	237

BOOK REVIEWS

The Popular Church in Brazil: Why It Didn't Liberate

A REVIEW ESSAY

Claiming the Virgin: The Broken Promise of Liberation

Theology in Brazil. By Robin Nagle.

The Brazilian Popular Church and the Crisis of Modernity. By

Manuel A. Vásquez.

Called for Freedom: The Changing Context of Liberation

Theology. By José Comblin, translated by Phillip

Berryman.

JOSEPH C. SANDS

260

Proverbs of Ancient Sumer: The World's Earliest Proverb

Collections. By Bendt Alster.

G. BROOKE LESTER

267

Religion and the American Civil War. Edited by Randall M.

Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson.

CHAD W. HALL

269

Encyclopedia of Early Christianity, second edition. Edited by

Everett Ferguson, Michael McHugh and Frederick W.

Norris.

HORACE SIX-MEANS

272

God's Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of

Submission. By R. Marie Griffith.

STEPHANIE STIDHAM ROGERS

274

Building a Protestant Left: Christianity and Crisis Magazine,

1941-1993. By Mark Hulsether.

KARLA ANN KOLL

277

Darwinism Comes to America. By Ronald L. Numbers.

ERIC L. THOMAS

279

*African American Women and Christian Activism: New York's
Black YWCA, 1905-1945.* By Judith Weisenfeld.

TISA WENGER

282

*Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities
and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week.* By Susan
Verdi Webster.

AMANDA J. WUNDER

285

Equal at the Creation: Sexism, Society, and Christian Thought
Edited by Joseph Martos and Pierre Hégy.

RACHEL S. BAARD

287

*Philosophy, Science, and Theology of Mission in the 19th and
20th Centuries.* A Missiological Encyclopedia, Part II:
Missionary Theology. By Jan A. B. Jongeneel.

MICHAEL MARTEN

289

Many Voices, One God: Being Faithful in a Pluralistic World.
A festschrift in honor of Shirley Guthrie. Edited by Walter
Brueggemann and George W. Stroup.

VIRGINIA W. LANDGRAF

292

CONTRIBUTORS

295

EDITORIAL

This issue of *KOINONIA* represents a change in the journal in several ways. First, *KOINONIA* has undergone a change in senior leadership. After several years of strong leadership, Karla Koll and Tomáš Hančil have left their positions as executive editor and production editor, respectively. This issue represents my inaugural issue as executive editor and Scott Paeth's inaugural issue as *KOINONIA*'s new production editor. We will seek to continue the strong work done by our predecessors. Second, this issue represents a change in *KOINONIA*'s production schedule. Previously, the central essay and several responses presented at *KOINONIA*'s annual Fall Forum were published in the fall issue of the journal. In reviewing this policy, the Editorial Board felt that our audience would be better served by publishing the Fall Forum essays in the spring issue and publishing our open issue each fall. Thus, this issue of the journal is an open issue containing several essays of general interest to the field of theological and religious studies. The essays presented at the 1999 *KOINONIA* Fall Forum will be subsequently published in our spring 2000 issue. Finally, this issue begins our new partnership with the Science Press Division of The Mack Printing Group. The Editorial Board is confident that this change to a new press will enhance the quality and appearance of *KOINONIA JOURNAL*.

Presented in this issue are several essays of interest to students and scholars in theological and religious studies: two in history, two in ethics, and one in systematic theology. In keeping with the mission of *KOINONIA*, the essays were selected based upon their exploration of areas of interest in the study of religion and their potential for interdisciplinary dialogue.

In an interesting display of interdisciplinary methodology, Richard Bautch explores the role that kneeling played in the daily worship of monks in fifth-century Byzantine Jerusalem. Though historians have long believed that genuflection was popular among monks in this period, Bautch maintains that this assumption has had little literary support. Bautch utilizes an unusual source in an attempt to provide further substantiation for this assumption about the role of kneeling in eastern monastic worship: skeletal remains exhumed from a fifth-century monastery in Jerusalem. He finds that studies of the bones of over 100 adult males unearthed in the Byzantine monastery reveal that almost all of them suffered from pathologies of the knees. These pathologies, he argues, indicate repeated kneeling throughout

the life of the monks. Bautch explains that the remains indicate no evidence of other unusual physical stress upon the monks and compares the findings of this monastery to forensic studies of other contemporary monasteries. This osteological evidence, coupled with more traditional historical data, allows Bautch to give a more concrete reconstruction of the daily life of these fifth-century monks and to see how they realized their monastic ideal of continuous prayer.

In his essay "John Calvin, Huguenot?" Galen Johnson traces the development of John Calvin's political theory of "nonresistance" between 1532 and 1562. Johnson places Calvin's writings on the topic in the historical context of French Huguenot persecutions. In his analysis, Johnson points to such interesting interdisciplinary topics as the biblical basis for pacifism and revolution, church/state relations, and the "psychosomatic relationships" between spiritual and physical suffering. According to Johnson, Calvin had developed the theory that secular authority is placed over people by the will of God prior to the severe persecutions of Huguenots in France. Once the persecution increased, Calvin—a French refugee in Geneva—still insisted that the "use of force to combat tyrants" should not be employed by Huguenots. Rather, he upheld martyrdom as a superior sacrifice to God. Though some scholars have argued that the brutal martyrdom of Amboise in 1559 provided a turning point in Calvin's thoughts on nonresistance, Johnson finds no definite traces of this supposed change in Calvin's thoughts either in his final version of the *Institutes* (1559) or in his *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (1560). Johnson further challenges the common argument that Calvin supported Coligny's armed resistance against the Duke of Guise's massacre of the Huguenots in Vassy in 1562. Against such arguments, Johnson claims that Calvin's biblical hermeneutics saw nonresistance as the primary biblical mandate. Johnson concludes that the increasingly combative political theory of later Huguenots represents a departure from Calvin's own work and that Calvin's theory of nonresistance did not significantly change throughout his life and work.

Tomáš Hančil, in his essay "Use of the Theory of Relativity in Theological Arguments about the Nature of God," discusses different appropriations of the theory of relativity for the theological task of talking about God. Hančil notes that theology itself started to challenge traditional understandings of God's eternality in favor of Trinitarian understandings of a God who is involved in time. Today, some theologians see the theory of relativity as a possible tool to save the concept of an eternal God. Hančil maintains that if

theology incorporates scientific theories in its task, it *de facto* claims an interrelatedness of science and theology that implies that each may benefit from the other and that also calls for theological statements to submit to falsificatory evidence. Hence, if theology is to use the scientific theory of relativity, it has to pay attention to this theory's original and intended use within the discipline of physics. Theology, he cautions, must be careful not to use the theory of relativity as a supposed opposite of a positivist worldview, for the theory itself finds its ground in positivism. In addition, he argues that theology must be careful not to limit the meaning of theology by linking it too closely with any particular scientific theory. In presenting his argument, Hančil examines four attempts to use the theory of relativity in theological discussions about God and concludes that each of the examined attempts is deficient precisely because it does not meet his proposed methodological standards. His essay concludes with the assertion that if theology and science are careful in staying true to their respective tasks, they can prove to be beneficial partners in their search for common ground.

Scott Paeth's essay, "'What Ought We to Do?' Normativity in Barth's Ethics of Creation," addresses the problem of normativity in theological ethics. Normativity as defined by Paeth is "the description of those norms according to which moral agents act." Paeth argues that the ethics embodied in Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* provide an inadequate account of theological normativity in that it fails to allow for the possibility that it may not be possible to heed the command of God under the condition of human fallenness. Paeth describes and critiques Barth's ethics, arguing that a better account of normativity is embodied in those theologies that recognize the human inability to heed the will of God as a tragic reality of the human condition.

In his essay "Whole Persons and Whole Communities: A Christian Ethics of Tears and Transcendence in the Context of AIDS in Thailand," James Thomas seeks to develop a Christian ethical framework for dealing with the AIDS epidemic in Thailand. Thomas, a specialist in the History of Religions, and specifically in Theravada Buddhism, was deeply involved in formulating a Christian response to the AIDS epidemic in Thailand from 1992-1996. In examining the various Christian responses to the AIDS crisis, he argues that deontological and utilitarian ethical systems lack an appropriate attention to the context of ethical decision making—especially with reference to the AIDS crises in Thailand. He further claims that a more suitable ethical framework for *Christian* reflection on the ethical dilemmas posed by AIDS is provided by the contextual ethics associated with the writings of theologi-

cal ethicist Paul Lehmann. Using Lehmann's *koinonia* ethics as a base point, Thomas supplements Lehmann's work with the feminist theological thought of Rita Nakashima Brock and Sharon Welch. Thomas's background as a historian of religions comes to bear on the topic because many of the people living with AIDS in Thailand are Buddhist, and he specifically states that an effective Christian ethics in Thailand must "learn to speak the language of Buddhism as fluently as possible." Moreover, he eschews any Christian ethical response to AIDS victims that seeks to convert them to Christianity.

Finally, the Editorial Board of *KOINONIA* apologizes for some printing problems in our last issue. Due to circumstances beyond our control, many copies of our spring 1999 issue contained a problem with the interior print that resulted in some pages being blurred or smeared. Unfortunately, this problem was not discovered until after the issue had been mailed to our subscribers. Again, we apologize for this lapse in professionalism on our part. As I stated above, in addressing this problem, the *KOINONIA* Editorial Board has elected to change presses, a change which we believe will ensure the highest quality publication possible.

—CHRISTOPHER S. D. ROGERS
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

On Bended Knee: Correlations Liturgical and Anthropological From a Fifth-Century Monastery

RICHARD J. BAUTCH

INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH ANTIQUITY HAS PROVIDED NO TREATISE ON KNEELING,¹ THERE is a unique witness to the phenomenon in the liturgy of genuflection and related norms of the early Church. As we shall see, the law of prayer indicates that kneeling enjoyed a certain popularity at least in Byzantine Jerusalem. Until now, this portion of the historical record has been minimally supported. But an osteological collection from a fifth-century monastery in Jerusalem now complements the literary evidence. The monks show a series of pathologies associated with flexion of the knee (Sheridan 1997:209) and probably caused by sustained, repetitive kneeling for prayer. Long seen

¹Because this study addresses genuflection as a bending of the knee, *gonuklisia* and *gonupeteō*, it prescind from broader questions of devotional gesture and posture that incorporate the bended knee. We will not study related terminology such as “prostration” (*proskunēsis*). (Ancient Christianity seems not to have maintained a distinction between genuflection and prostration [Leclercq 1924:1018].) Another posture, the *metanoia*, is of two sorts, only one of which involves bending the knee (Bertrand 1953:213). Also, the *epitimion*, could entail kneeling but as easily did not (Taft and Kazhdan 1991:1134). In general, “The vocabulary of the ancient world was rather fluid when it came to describing ritual postures or gestures.... Often the same set of gestures (kissing, prostration, kneeling) is used to manifest attitudes or actions originally attached to different occasions [e.g. supplication, adoration]” (Leonard and Mitchell 1994:29). To parse all the potentially relevant terminology is beyond the scope of this study.

as a dubious footnote to the historical record, kneeling in Byzantine Christianity is rather a fact corroborated by anthropological evidence and analysis.²

This paper uses a biocultural approach to explore an interstice between the liturgical practice of the early Church and anthropological data from one monastery. First considered are three liturgical phenomena: the service of the genuflection, contemporary regulations on kneeling, and psalm prayer in monasteries. There follows a presentation of the skeletal remains exhumed from St. Stephen's Byzantine monastery in Jerusalem. Together parts one and two allow for a partial reconstruction of ascetic life at the monastery when it flourished in the fifth and sixth centuries CE. The reconstruction, in turn, challenges the distinction between the cathedral and monastic offices by illustrating several continuities between the two at Byzantine St. Stephen's.

KNEELING IN ANCIENT SOURCES

The early Church maintained the mutual importance of standing and kneeling at prayer. Along with standing, kneeling was valued highly in select liturgies from Jerusalem. As early as Egeria's account of the evening office on the Mount of Olives for the Thursday of Holy Week, kneeling is conspicuous. The office includes a vigil with a series of three psalms, after which prayers are said while kneeling (Wilkinson 1981:267). Shortly thereafter, in the fifth century CE, a rite developed to mark kneeling's return to the liturgy after Pentecost; in Palestine the vespers of Pentecost became the service of the *gonuklisia*, or genuflection (Renoux 1971:201–7).

To celebrate this rite, Jerusalemites traveled together to different holy places on Pentecost night. The readings were essentially those of the Eucharist celebrated earlier that day: Psalm 142, Acts 2:1–21, and John 14:15–24. For the evening service, however, John 16:5–14 was read. A common genuflection followed these verses about the Advocate's testimony on sin,

²The anthropological findings to follow have been obtained by Susan G. Sheridan and assistants as part of a three-year project "A Biocultural Model for the Study of Urban Monasticism in Early Christianity," funded principally by the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts at the University of Notre Dame. Also directing the project are Michael S. Driscoll and Blake Leyerle, while more than 10 graduate students have participated in aspects of the research.

righteousness and judgment. After being celebrated on the Mount of Olives, the rite was repeated in three other holy places. One of the earliest commentaries on the service of the genuflection is found in the sixth-century hymns of Severus of Antioch. He states that because Christ's rising from the dead has raised us also, until the day of Pentecost

We do not bend the knee to the earth when we pray; and against our enemies we sing and say with the divine Psalmist and prophet David, "They have been entangled and fallen, but we have risen and been set upright." But when the Holy Spirit has shone and been revealed to us in God-befitting fashion, we bow the knee because we cannot endure the sight of him and we signify that it is through the Spirit, the Paraclete, that we have learned the perfect worship in the Holy Trinity (James of Edessa 1971:147).

The commentary explains that kneeling is an expression of meekness before the Godhead, while rising, on the other hand, distinguishes the upright person from the fallen. Interestingly, at the time of this writing the symbolism of kneeling and rising at liturgy had already undergone 300 years of development.

The wider context for the service of the genuflection involves the suspension of said practice on Sundays and during the Easter season. To state the matter positively, the Church endorsed kneeling except on Sundays and during the Easter season. An early source for this is Tertullian's *De Corona*: "It is unlawful to fast or kneel on the day of the Lord. We rejoice in this same opportunity from Easter to Pentecost" (3:4). Tertullian's *De Oratione* (23.2) indirectly defends the practice of kneeling. It laments that some people abstain from kneeling on Saturday as well as Sunday, thereby causing scandal, and it limits abstention to Sundays and Pentecost (Evans 1953:32). The theology latent in this practice is elaborated in another text of the third century, *Questiones ad Orthodoxos*: "We therefore kneel on six days for prayer, as a sign of our fallen state. But on the Lord's day, we do not kneel, as a sign of the resurrection through which by the grace of Christ we have been freed from sin and death" (115). The author adds that the custom originated in apostolic times and has been handed down by Irenaeus. Early in the fourth century, kneeling on Sunday and Easter became an issue at several councils. Like the Synod of 307 (Canon 25), the Council of Nicea (Canon 20) requires all Christians to pray standing on Sundays and in the days of Pentecost (cf. Hefele and Leclercq 1907:I:I, 618–9).

The councils' terse *acta* raise several questions: Was the legislation, as is often the case, enacted to curb a prevailing practice? Was the practice of kneeling so habitual that it undermined theological teaching on the practice? In a less controversial scenario, was kneeling simply the posture of preference which people could not be bothered to forego on Sundays and during the Easter season? Did the councils' rulings help them comply? In any event, issues of kneeling were not soon dispatched. Later in the fourth century, the Church's regulation of kneeling is recognized by Epiphanius (*Haer* 3.523.6) and by Athanasius (*Didascalia* 318 *Patrum Nicaenorum* 28.1641.4; *Syntagma ad Monachos* 2.17.2). Unfortunately, these texts treat the issue in no real depth. In other writings, however, Athanasius and Basil address the significance of kneeling at psalm prayer.

In the ambit of psalm prayer Basil and Athanasius speak of the bending of the knee in its nominal and verbal forms, *gonuklisia* and *gonupeteō*. These authors do not explain the various functions of kneeling when Christians gathered to pray the psalms. Rather, we must conjecture based on what they *do* tell us piecemeal. In this regard Basil's *Sermo* 13 (*Sermo Asceticus*) is intriguing:

Let prayer time cover the whole of life, but since it is necessary at certain intervals to suspend the bending of the knee and the chanting of psalms, one should follow the hours designated for prayer by the saints (4.55).

Basil tells us that psalmody and bending the knee are two spheres of normative prayer life, which works best when conformed to the design of the hours. Thus, bending the knee, either literally or figuratively, has a significant role in that life. It is not clear how bending the knee relates to psalm prayer, but the two have a sure place in this fourth-century view of prayer. Elsewhere Basil indicates that kneeling has a moral dimension. Kneeling down dramatizes the fall into sin. In *Homilia de Spiritu Sancto* he writes:

Also, every time we bend our knees for prayer and then rise up again, we show by this action that through sin we fell down to earth, but our Creator, the Lover of Humankind, has called us back to heaven (66.66–7).

As kneeling dramatizes the fall into sin, rising up begins the return to God through love. This theology was seen earlier in *Questiones ad Orthodoxos*,

where *not* kneeling signaled the resurrection. One is struck by the complementarity between kneeling and rising; as kneeling recalls sin, rising celebrates salvation. It is noteworthy that Basil does not equate kneeling to punishment. (As in the contemporary order of penitents, whose kneeling is one penal phase whereby the sinner regains full communion with the Church [Osborne 1990:64–8].) The kneeling tradition that Basil has adopted to describe psalm prayer sets kneeling in a theological relationship with raised postures.

Athanasius uses the noun *gonuklisia* differently than does Basil. His *Epistulae ad Castorem* describes the gestures that an assembly rehearses either after psalm prayer concludes or, perhaps, between the psalms of a given liturgy.

When they convene according to the required time of the assembly, after the psalm is finished they do not begin to genuflect immediately. Rather, before bending the knees, they pray by standing still a while and holding their hands outstretched. After these things, when they fall to the ground, and all pray anew in genuflection for a little while, [and then] they arise simultaneously. With their hands spread out, they complete the supplications most eagerly and intensely. No one bends the knee or rises from the genuflections until the one praying for them first bends the knee or first rises (1.39).

Athanasius' final statement turns on the parallelism of bending the knee and rising. Hence the tradition that opposes kneeling/fall and rising/resurrection appears to have influenced him. Moreover, there are noteworthy parallels to the contemporary Jewish prayer of supplications.³ The supplications,

³Supplication is said to have begun with Cyrus of Persia and to have involved in its earlier forms prostrations and a kiss. In Jewish liturgy, prostrations which accompany the songs of the Levites and their prayer in the Second Temple Period are attested in scripture (Neh 9:3; 2 Chr 20:18, 29:28) and the rabbis (*m. Tamid* 7:3). According to Ismar Elbogen, the custom was transferred from the Temple to the synagogue: "At the end of the '*Amidah* [daily prayers] the opportunity was given to every individual to pour out his heart and to conduct a dialogue with his Creator without any external pressure. Thus the most difficult problem of all public worship was resolved, and an appropriate balance achieved between the demands of the community for congregational prayer and the justified desire of the individual for personal prayer independent of and uninfluenced by the community" (Elbogen 1993:66–7).

like the devotions Athanasius describes, amplify the community's diurnal prayer by appending gestures rather than text. The supplications allow individuals to personalize their prayer. So too the Christians of Athanasius' time; while psalm prayer remains a communal act, afterward the one who prays has recourse to a certain stillness as he or she stands momentarily in the *orans* position. The subject of psalm prayer is both the Church and the individual.

KNEELING AT ONE BYZANTINE MONASTERY

In the fourth century, patterns of prayer emerged among the monks dwelling in Jerusalem and in the desert east of the city. While different living arrangements prevailed, often these individuals lived eremetically but would gather on Saturday and Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist and share a cooked meal. While in their solitude, the monks placed great emphasis on psalm prayer, per the guidelines of leaders such as Chariton. He counseled the monks to pray and chant psalms seven times daily, "at prescribed hours and with great concentration" (Patrich 1995:5). As well, psalms could be recited while a monk otherwise labored at a given task. It is generally assumed that monks genuflected as part of the "monastic office" (Taft 1986:211,363). It would make sense that Judean monks in particular complemented their psalm prayer with gesture, the bending of the knee normative among Eastern Christians for at least two centuries and ritualized in the indigenous service of the genuflection.

During the Byzantine period the monastery of St. Stephen's in Jerusalem, currently site of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française, played an important role in the Church and thus appears in numerous writings from this era. Accounts describe a large ecclesial complex situated along a major axis of pilgrimage (Vincent and Abel 1926:760). Of the personnel at this site, little is preserved except for hagiographic accounts of Gabriel, the monastery's *hēgoumenos* when it flourished in the mid-fifth century. Additional data is newly available. Susan Sheridan and her assistants have exhumed and studied more than 15,000 bones representing a population sample of minimally 109 adults and 58 children. Archeological and chemical analyses date this collection to the Byzantine period. Because Sheridan and her colleagues focus on biocultural issues, they are generating diverse information on demography, diet, and disease at Byzantine St. Stephen's. In general, analysis

of the remains has demonstrated a healthy, robust, largely male (96%) community who lived well into their 40s (Sheridan 1997:209). One pathology, however, is conspicuous: that of the knees.

The knees of virtually every adult male demonstrate a deterioration of bone where there has been undue wear and tear. The femur, patella, tibia and fibula typically contain some evidence of bone-on-bone rubbing (eburnation), cartilage torn from the bone (ulceration), or damage where a muscle, ligament, or tendon attaches to bone (lipping). It is illustrative to focus on the patella or knee cap. First, one finds sclerotic build-up where the muscles from the thigh and calf attach to the articular surface inside the patella. This indicates that these muscles were used excessively over the course of a lifetime. Along the outer rim of the interior one finds liping, which indicates the bone has been stimulated to grow as a result of abnormally frequent flexion. Finally, on the outer surface of the kneecap there are striations that indicate undue strain where muscles were attached. In addition, the condyles of the femur show liping and eburnation at sites where muscle attaches. All of these pathologies result from one particular action of the knee: bending. They could not be the effect of flexing or extending the knee.

Using a biomechanical model of bipedality (Lovejoy 1988:118–22), Sheridan is identifying related stress points from the pelvis to the toes of the monks who knelt. For example, where the Achilles tendon attaches to the calcaneus there tends to be moderate to severe liping. As well, there is arthritic liping on the metatarsals and phalanges of the foot. These pathologies could be further, indirect indications of the monks' repetitive kneeling. With his lower body altogether arthritic, a monk endured considerable distress; he would have been painfully aware of his overtaxed frame every waking hour.

In order to confirm kneeling as the probable cause, it is important to consider other scenarios wherein behavioral stress would account for these osteological problems. Especially in fifth-century Palestine, patronage led to the literal building up of Christendom (Armstrong 1969:17–30). For example, Byzantine monks in Palestine labored in agriculture (Avi-Yonah 1955:46–7) and construction (Binns 1994:95). But were either of these activities responsible for knee deterioration at St. Stephen's, there would be related pathologies elsewhere on the monks' frames. The group, however, is otherwise unremarkable and suffered no physical stress comparable to that visited upon the knee. Were other monks at contemporary monasteries prone to arthritic knees? There is no evidence to this effect, based upon a review

of archaeological reports from 73 monasteries and monastic sites in the Judean Desert.⁴ Comparative data, however, is far too sparse to be conclusive as publications from only ten sites mention burials and bones. One set of remains subject to examination, some 25 specimens from the Monastery of St. Euthymios, was said to show little pathology (Meimaris 1989:31–2). When the entire remains from the same site were subject to further study, the demographics as a whole compared significantly with those of St. Stephen's in terms of sex, age distribution and robusticity (Sheridan 1999), but there was no correspondence to the knee pathologies observed at the Jerusalem site (Hershkovitz et. al. 1993:377).

PARTIAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ASCETICAL LIFE AT ST. STEPHEN'S

Their pathological knees aside, the monks whom we observe from St. Stephen's were likely elites, perhaps the monastery's *hēgoumenoi*. This can be deduced first from the tombs in which they were buried, which predate the Byzantine period; the masterful construction would befit royalty (Barkay and Kloner 1987:54–6). Another indicator is diet, which would have provided an “adequate to abundant caloric intake” to sustain these monks' stocky, muscular bodies (Sheridan 1999). In this vein, even their dental remains are being studied for attrition patterns that reveal the foods they consumed. In short, their biocultural profile points to men who are healthy and privileged, yet ascetic. Their status provided the “leisure” to pray continuously in a very intentional manner, replete with gesture. Because they were part of a *Zeitgeist* that valued kneeling, they engaged this particular gesture to the point of obsession.

Theologically, these monks embodied the dictum of Basil: Let prayer time cover the whole of life, with prayer defined as the bending of the knee and chanting of psalms. Is it coincidence that the *hēgoumenos* Gabriel, a native Cappadochian (Binns 1994:42), was a living link to Basil and his milieu? We may imagine him and the other monks kneeling at psalm prayer as one feature of their monastic office. Because we know that monks of this period worked in agriculture and construction, we may think in terms of a

⁴ Kelley Coblentz Bautch and the author conducted this study in June, 1998 at the École Biblique et Archéologique Française.

spectrum comprising elites and temporal coadjutors devoted to feeding and sheltering a monastery's population. Perhaps both classes of monks resided at Byzantine St. Stephen's, which is described as an enormous complex. The bones of the rank and file, not yet located much less examined, could provide key comparative data in the form of distinctive patterns of wear resulting from behavior commensurate with their status.

CONCLUSION

In this study, "psalm prayer" has referred broadly to both early Christians gathering twice daily at church to praise God and monks who cultivated a state of prayer by means of psalmody and prostrations throughout the day. The two are sufficiently different that liturgical studies speak of cathedral and monastic offices, particularly in Byzantine Jerusalem (Baldovin 1989:30). Cathedral prayer is thought of as a public cult whereby the Church responds to God; it is praise in the mouth of Church. On the other hand, the monastic office is essentially meditation upon God's word, leading to a prayerful response replete with gesture. This study has blurred the distinction because we agree, with Robert F. Taft, that "the differences are more in style than in substance, more in the structure and aim of the offices than in their theologies" (Taft 1986:364). That is, psalm prayer was the means for fellow Christians to receive God's word in the heart and proclaim it with their lips. The unicity of this act stands over and against distinctions based upon social or ecclesial location.

Taft observes that the cathedral and monastic offices begin to fuse in urban monasticism. The example of Byzantine St. Stephen's is illustrative; the monks evince the continuities between the two senses of the office. As their knees indicate a life given over to psalmody and genuflection, they realize the monastic ideal of continuous prayer. As their knees reflect an ecclesial practice that has been legislated and enshrined in select liturgies, they are exemplars of the local church and its worship. These Christians are influenced by both monastic heritage and Church tradition, which are equally foundational to the psalm prayer of the early Church.

REFERENCES

Armstrong, Gregory T.

- 1969 "Fifth and Sixth Century Church Buildings in the Holy Land." *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 14/1:17-30.

Athanasius

- 1887 *Epistulae ad Castorem*. Patrologia (Series Graeca), vol. XXVIII, col. 852. Paris: J.-P. Migne.

Avi-Yonah, M.

- 1958 "The Economics of Byzantine Palestine." *Israel Exploration Journal* 8:39-51.

Baldovin, John F.

- 1989 *Liturgy in Ancient Jerusalem*. Nottingham: Grove.

Barkay, Gabriel, and Amos Kloner

- 1987 "Have the Tombs of the Kings of Judah Been Found?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 13/4:54-6.

Basil of Caesaria

- 1885 *Sermo 13 (sermo asceticus)*. Patrologia (Series Graeca), vol. XXXI, col. 877. Paris: J.-P. Migne.
- 1886 *Homilia de Spiritu Sancto*. Patrologia (Series Graeca), vol. XXVII, col. 192. Paris: J.-P. Migne.

Bertrand, Émile

- 1953 "Génuflexions et Métanies." *Dictionnaire de la Spiritualité*. Vol. VI: 213-26. Paris: Beauchesne.

Binns, John

- 1994 *Ascetics and Ambassadors of Christ: The Monasteries of Palestine 314-631*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Egeria

- 1981 *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land*. Ed. J. Wilkinson. Jerusalem:

Ariel.

Elbogen, Ismar

1993 *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*. Translated by Raymond P. Scheindlin. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.

Evans, Ernest

1952 *Tertullian's Tract on The Prayer*. London: SPCK.

Hefele, Charles J., and Henri Leclercq

1907 *Histoire des Conciles d'après les Documents Originaux*. Paris: Letouzey et Ané.

Hershkovitz, I., et al.

1993 "The Human Remains from the Byzantine Monastery at Khan el-Ahmar." *Liber Annus* 43:373–85.

James of Edessa

1971 *The Hymns of Severus of Antioch and Others*. *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. VI: 146–7. Edited by E. W. Brooks. Turnhout: Brepols.

Justin

1884 *Questiones ad Orthodoxos*. *Patrologia (Series Graeca)*, vol. VI, col. 1364. Paris: J.-P. Migne.

Leclercq, Henri

1924 "Génuflexion." *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et Liturgie*. 1018–22. Paris: Letouzey et Ané.

Leonard, John K., and Nathan D. Mitchell

1994 *The Postures of the Assembly During the Eucharistic Prayer*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications.

Lovejoy, C. Owen

1988 "Evolution of Human Walking." *Scientific American* 259/5:118–25.

Meimaris, Yiannis E.

- 1989 "The Monastery of St. Euthymios the Great at Khan el-Ahmar, in the Wilderness of Judea." *Rescue Excavations and Basic Protection Measures 1976-79, Preliminary Report*. Athens: Eptalophos.

Osborne, Kenan, O.F.M.

- 1990 *Reconciliation and Justification: The Sacrament and Its Theology*. New York: Paulist.

Papadakis, Aristeides

- 1991 "Epitimion." *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Vol. I: 723-4. New York: Oxford University Press.

Patrich, Joseph

- 1995 "Palestinian Desert Monasticism: The Monastic Systems of Chariton, Gerasimus and Sabas." *Cristianesimo Nella Storia* 16:1-9.

Renoux, Athanase

- 1971 *Le Codex Arménien: Jérusalem 121*. *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. 36/168: 144-388. Turnhout: Brepols.

Sheridan, Susan G.

- 1997 "Biocultural Reconstruction of Kneeling Pathology in a Byzantine Judean Monastery." *American Journal of Physical Anthropology Supp.* 24.
- 1999 "New Life the Dead Receive," *Revue Biblique* (forthcoming).

Taft, Robert

- 1986 *The Liturgy of the Hours in the East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and its Meaning for Today*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

Taft, Robert, and A. Kazhdan

- 1991 "Kneeling." *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 2:1134. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tertullian

- 1844 *De Corona*. Patrologia (Series Latina), vol. 2, cols. 79–80.
Paris: J.-P. Migne.
- 1878 *De Oratione*. Patrologia (Series Latina), vol. 1, cols. 1298–9.
Paris: J.-P. Migne.

Vincent, H., and F. M. Abel

- 1926 “The Church of St. Stephen’s Stoning.” In *Jerusalem Nouvelle*,
vol. IV: 743–65. Paris: J. Gabalda.

Use of the Theory of Relativity in Theological Arguments about the Nature of God

TOMÁŠ HANČIL

INTRODUCTION

THE REVOLUTIONARY ACHIEVEMENTS OF PHYSICS HAVE ALWAYS HAD a deep impact on theology. Unfortunately, due to the highly complex arguments and proofs carried out in mathematical form, the ideas of contemporary physics are not easily communicated outside the discipline. Even for physicists the implications of the latest advances are not always clear. The majority of theologians have a hard time both figuring out what the issues involved are and how they affect theology. Yet, in spite of these difficulties, physicists talk about the theological implications of new discoveries in physics, and theologians attempt to formulate consequences physical theories have on theology.

The radical claims of the theory of relativity in its special or general forms challenged not only our understanding of the material world, but also had an impact on theological concepts. I will open my argument with general methodological considerations, and in the second part I shall focus on four theological attempts to relate the theory of relativity and the doctrine of God, specifically the doctrine of God's eternity. I will leave other issues, such as the relation of timelessness to other basic Christian doctrines, the interaction between God and the world, divine agency, the personality of God, and the incarnation, aside. The objective of this paper is to assess whether the treatment of the theory of relativity in these four theological works is appropriate both from a methodological and a scientific point of view, not to present a theological point about God's relation to time.

In doing so, I will address more general questions about the role of theology in the current scientific scene and about the possibility of combining insights from physics with insights from theology. What is the relevance of

the theory of relativity for philosophical discussions about the concept of God and God's relation to time? What are the methodological implications of introducing a theory about physical properties of matter into theological reasoning? The assessment of the use of the theory of relativity will be introduced by a discussion of methodological issues that will guide my criticism.

The challenge presented by the theory of relativity has such a deep impact on theological reasoning because theology has, from its own resources, begun to redefine the traditional understanding of God's relation to time. Recent theological positions challenged the traditional concept of God's eternity in favor of a Trinitarian understanding of God who is involved in time.¹ Yet these arguments for God's relatedness to time as presented by Trinitarian or process theologies are challenged by the theory of relativity just as much as is the classical concept of God's eternity. Delmas Lewis notes: "there is no reconciling the doctrine of divine eternity with the central anthropological claims of Christian theology. The claim that God is eternal may well be a coherent piece of *philosophical* theology. It remains to be shown that it is a coherent piece of *Christian* theology" (Lewis 1988:83).

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Before engaging in discussion about God's eternity, timelessness, or temporality in relation to the theory of relativity, some terminological clarifications and historical-critical observations are necessary. The traditional definition of God's eternity that set the pace for discussions about this topic up to the twentieth century was given by Boethius in his *Consolation* philosophy:

That God is eternal, then, is the common judgment of all who live by reason. Let us therefore consider what eternity is, for this makes plain to us both the divine nature and knowledge. Eternity, then, is the complete possession of all at once of illimitable life. This becomes clearer

¹There are many authors who explicitly argue that timelessness is incompatible with the notion of the Christian God: J. R. Lucas says "to deny that God is temporal is to deny that God is personal in any sense in which we understand personality" (Lucas 1993). Thomas D. Senor (Senor 1990) and Ted Peters (Peters 1993) argue that the doctrines of timelessness and incarnation are incompatible.

by comparison with temporal things, for whatever lives in time proceeds as something present from the past into the future, and there is nothing placed in time that can embrace the whole extent of its life equally (Boethius 1963:422.5–424.10).

Boethius distinguishes between two possible meanings of “eternal”; he does not understand eternal merely as everlasting, having no beginning or end. Boethius’s definition suggests that God is eternal in a sense of lacking temporal categories altogether. Such a notion of God’s eternality is defended by Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, together with Brian Leftow. They all use the theory of relativity in their arguments.

There are only a few biblical passages that can be taken as warrants for theological assertions about God’s timelessness. The Old Testament refers to God as eternal, but overall it is agreed that *olam* does not mean timeless eternity in a metaphysical sense, but rather endless time, with the stress on God’s ontological priority. Old Testament passages concerning God’s relation to time are not generally interested in the assertion of the timelessness of God, but always in an assertion of YHWH as the true and only God. The New Testament treats this theme similarly, except in one passage (Rev. 10:6) that talks about the end of time. The abundant references to future eons, however, shows that even the future is understood clearly in temporal categories. In general it is without doubt that the God of the Old and New Testament is a God who acts in a particular historical situation, and, while God is a Lord of history, God takes on a historically conditioned humanity to reveal who God is.

It is therefore clear that the treatment of divine timelessness in systematic theology is dependent on extra-biblical sources, namely Greek philosophy. The oldest ideas about timelessness come from Parmenides and Zeno. A similar idea was presented by Plato, who regarded Ideas (Forms) to be timeless and immutable, not subject to the aging and decay which afflicted everything wordly. Eternal, unchanging Ideas represented the highest form of reality, and the material world was real only by virtue of participation in Ideas. This connection between eternity, perfection, immutability, and ontological superiority became part of the Christian concept of God.

Christians attempted to express God’s ontological superiority by assigning to God the same attribute Plato assigned to Ideas: eternality. The concept of creation was also formulated in connection with eternality. God as creator of the world created space and time and is therefore ontologically beyond space-time. The classical theological position claims that “time and

space provide the framework or container, so to speak, within which human activity is carried on. Yet God is outside the container and therefore not limited to temporal and spatial constraints” (Peters 1993:267). Later, influenced by Plotinos and the middle Platonists, Augustine made the doctrine of eternity part of Christian theology. “The distinguishing mark between time and eternity is that the former does not exist without some movement and change, while in the latter there is no change at all” (Augustine 1950:11.6). This notion that what is changing lacks perfection is again brought into Christian theology by Platonism and further supports the theological doctrine about God’s eternity (Padget 1992:44).

Unfortunately, this theological conception of God’s eternity is incompatible with a philosophical understanding of time. Traditional distinctions between an A-series of time that is ordered in respect to present, past, and future, and a B-series of time that lacks the tenses and accepts only relations of “earlier than” and “later than,” is not useful for the theological concept of an eternal God related to the temporal world. The “eternal now” that God experiences according to Augustine and Boethius, not only abolishes the past-present-future of the A-series of time, but limits the possibility of using the B-series of time as well. All temporal things—in the past, present, or future—are on an equal ontological basis with respect to the existence of an eternal being. The “A” theory of time, however, argues that there is a *real distinction* between past, present, and future, and that past and future things do not exist, not only for us, but objectively. God is said to know the relative relations between events in the temporal world, but God’s knowing as such does not ground any possibility of such a distinction since it is eternal and immutable. From God’s point of view, the past, present, and future lose their ontological difference. Therefore, even if the B-series of time seems closer to the concept of eternity, it cannot relate to a world that is clearly functioning in categories of the A-series of time.

These conceptual difficulties, together with Trinitarian considerations, should alone provoke a serious theological discussion about God’s eternity. It is not surprising that some theologians reach to science in their attempts to redefine or save the concept of an eternal God. The theory of relativity (TR) in its general and special form² seems to offer itself for such a use because it redefine how we understand time and space.

²Reference to the theory of relativity (TR) in this paper includes both the special and general theories of relativity. STR and GTR refer to the special theory of relativity and the general theory of relativity respectively.

THE THEORY OF RELATIVITY AND ITS USE IN THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

Methodological Considerations

Before I turn to the analysis and critique of the actual uses of TR in theological discussions, some considerations are needed concerning the very possibility of utilizing TR for theological arguments. Most of the point that I shall be making in this section will be illustrated by concrete examples, through a critical discussion in the second part of this essay of four attempts to use TR for theological argumentation. Although it is true that science and religion talk about the same reality, both the methods and questions asked by the respective fields are different. In order to relate science and theology in a useful way, both parts of the discussion must be taken seriously. By using the theory of relativity within its discourse, theology irrevocably claims that scientific and theological discourses are connected and that their *advances are mutually beneficial*. Methodologically, the introduction of scientific theory into theological arguments implies that discoveries in both fields must be used as possible falsificatory evidence. In other words, it is methodologically unacceptable to borrow from science only those parts that supports theological agendas and disregard scientific evidence when it contradicts theological claims.

If we want to use a scientific observation or theory for theological arguments, several methodological implications follow: we must understand the *presuppositions* and the *scope* of answers the theory is supposed (or able) to give, as well as how to *interpret* them. While the theory of relativity, in its special or general form, is accepted in science as a very accurate interpretation of the behavior of macroscopic matter moving through space at large distances and high velocities (disregarding quantum effects), philosophical and theological uses of the theory often make claims about non-spatial and timeless or even spiritual entities, which are clearly out of the explanatory framework of the theory of relativity. The philosophical and theological use of the theory are then open to criticism from the scientific point of view: the use of TR for arguments about nonmaterial or spiritual entities suggests unwarranted parallels and consequently loses all argumentative authority that the scientific formulation of TR enjoys.

On the other hand, Christians claim that God's activities affect the material world. Therefore, theories of the material world need to be connected coherently with the claims of Christianity. Yet we have to be very careful not

to cross the boundaries between the theory of relativity and religion too easily. We must ask about the conditions of applicability of the physical theory of movement in space for use as part of a metaphysical argument even if we use it in an analogical sense. I will show later that even “analogical” references to the theory of relativity must pay attention to its original and intended use within physics.

Some theologians welcome TR as a refutation of the dominant positivistic structures of science, clearly documenting that even seemingly undoubtable Newtonian physics can be proved insufficient. But it is not warranted to see the theory of relativity as an ally in the tension between the mechanistic understanding of the universe, as portrayed by the Enlightenment understanding of physics and religion, which sees the material world as part of a larger context of values and meanings. The theory of relativity, in its focus, is not different from previous mechanistic attempts to understand the universe, and in no way suggests the openness of physics to the use of metaphysical concepts.³ The theory of relativity was intended to provide an explanation along logical positivistic lines. Albert Einstein refers to Ernst Mach as the greatest influence in the epistemological orientation of the natural scientists of our time, and it is well known that Mach opposed any kind of metaphysical understanding of time and space (Mach 1960:249–60). Therefore, if we see TR in its historical setting, its use for arguments supporting metaphysical assertions is very doubtful and certainly not faithful to the intended use.

The last methodological point concerns the dangers of connecting a theological argument too closely to a particular scientific theory. Commitment to the advances of science must never take the form of proving theological points through physical theory. Theological claims have by definition a surplus of meaning, which must not be endangered by connecting it to an empirical theory that is going to be replaced with the next advance in the field. In the case of the theory of relativity we can assume that it is only a stage in scientific explanation.

In addition, there is little agreement on whether the special theory of relativity (STR) should be taken merely as a tool for predicting what will be observed in different situations, or as a description of the fundamental nature of the universe and the behavior of matter. Physicists see every

³Quantum theory and its implications, such as Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, are much more important in this respect.

theory as a merely approximate descriptive tool that allows one to make predictions within a certain range of possibilities. The popular presentation of physical theories that theologians usually work with, on the other hand, tends to stress the ontological interpretation of physical theories. It is important not to fight straw opponents. If theologians suppose physicists make ontological claims about the nature of matter, it is as wrong as if physicists fight the outdated notion of the God of the gaps in today's theology.

Critics of the STR, like Stapp, are very clear that the ontological claims of STR are far from acceptable, and, I would add, rarely even considered:

The observation dealt with by physicists depend, as far as we know, on the relative space-time positions of events, but not on the order in which they come into existence. Thus in pragmatic science the questions of order of coming into existence is irrelevant: ontological questions need be answered only if one demands an ontology. Thus the theory of relativity, considered as a theory of physical phenomena, says nothing about the issue in question (Stapp and Jones 1977:176).

It is troubling that contemporary physics has very little use for the classical philosophical distinction between things as they are for us and things in themselves (noumena—phenomena). Physicists are unwilling to follow this line of reasoning because it questions the basis of scientific research based on observation. Since Kant, it is hard to intelligibly refer to things in themselves outside of practical (moral) reason. Stapp's suggestion is therefore doubtful from the classic scientific point of view. It does not make sense to ask for things in themselves if there are no tools to observe them. However, if Stapp's suggestion is understood as an inclusion of value and morality into the whole picture of the structure of the universe along the line of process philosophy, it may be accepted as a widening of the physical theory beyond its original methodological limitations. If this is the case, his suggestion to distinguish between observation about a thing for us and a thing in itself is not only sound, but might be beneficial for further research that would be impossible with the current methodological framework. Let me now proceed into an analysis of some particular uses of STR that shaped the understanding and application of STR in the dialogue between science and religion.

Use of the Special Theory of Relativity by
Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann

An article by Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzman about the relation of the eternal God to the temporal world based on STR set the pace for the philosophical and theological treatment of this question for many years. This article is still referred to as a classical piece of scholarship concerning the issue of God's eternity by many scholars and encyclopedias.⁴

After an exposition of Boethius's definition of eternity,⁵ Stump and Kretzmann try to find out how an eternal being can possibly relate to temporal entities, such as the world and human beings. God's eternity must not stand between God and humanity, and must allow for all the key Christian doctrines that revolve around God's deep involvement with humanity in its temporal form. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann phrase the problem as a problem of simultaneity: "Simultaneity is of course generally and unreflectively taken to mean existence or occurrence at one and the same time. But to attribute to an eternal entity or event simultaneity with anything, we need a coherent characterization of simultaneity that does not make it altogether temporal" (Stump and Kretzmann 1987:226).

In order to solve this problem, Stump and Kretzmann posited two kinds of simultaneity: T simultaneity—which is existence or an occurrence at one and the same time—and E simultaneity—which is existence or an occurrence at one and the same eternal present. However, by doing that they introduced another problem, namely, how to relate these two simultaneities to each other. If an eternal entity should relate to a temporal

⁴The essay "Eternity" appeared originally in the *Journal of Philosophy* 78, no. 8 (1981):429-51. My references will be to the reprint of the essay in Morris 1987.

⁵See the quote from Boethius at the beginning of this essay. Although the purpose of this paper is not a theological critique of the doctrine of God's eternity, I would like to point to several important features of Boethius's definition: The very first sentence carries a heavy rhetorical charge, suggesting that anybody who dares to differ in opinion cannot possibly have any reason at all. Even if this kind of opening was acceptable and even required in Boethius's time, we should be able to see that the only basis for his definition of eternity is his platonic philosophical basis. The movement from "common judgement" to the "consider what eternity is" presupposes that there is a given definition of eternity everybody must accept. Boethius offers a definition that uses *living* instead of *being*, which again begs the question of whether there can be life without beginning or end, and if there is life without change. It could be argued that life by definition involves change and thus illimitable life possessed all at once seems to be a contradiction in terms.

one, there must be a way for those two entities to exist simultaneously. This is, however, impossible if we have separate definitions of simultaneity in the temporal realm and eternity. Stump and Kretzmann formulated the problem thus:

It is theoretically impossible to specify a single mode of existence for two relata of which one is eternal and the other temporal. To do so would be to reduce what is temporal to what is eternal (thus making time illusory) of what is eternal to what is temporal (thus making eternity illusory), or both what is temporal and what is eternal to some third mode of existence; and all three alternatives are ruled out (Stump and Kretzmann 1987:227).

This conclusion—that there is no solution for a definition of simultaneity that would connect T simultaneity with E simultaneity—is not acceptable. What Stump and Kretzmann are looking for is exactly the opposite, namely, a logically coherent concept that would allow members of the temporal world to be simultaneous with eternity. They cannot admit that there is not an Eternal-Temporal simultaneity (E-T simultaneity) that would allow members of eternity to be simultaneous with members of the temporal realm. They need such a connection to make the concept of eternity coherent with other notions of God, especially with the God portrayed in the biblical tradition. The connection, they claim, is to be found in E-T simultaneity.

To refute their own philosophical-logical argument about the impossibility of directly linking the eternal and the temporal, they go back and point to the fact that even simple Temporal (T) simultaneity is a relative notion, as STR suggests. Events occurring in different places are seen as simultaneous for one observer and not simultaneous for an observer in a different referential frame. An empirically provable physical theory (STR) suggests the relativity of one part of their incompatible pair of simultaneities. But the notion of relativity itself does not solve the problem. It is not the relativity of simultaneity that Stump and Kretzmann are looking for. Rather, they used STR as a source for the notion that two observers can contradict each other (their observations of a single event can differ) without introducing an incoherence.

Stump and Kretzmann use the famous image of a train moving very fast (comparable to the speed of light) and two events (lighting flashes) occur-

ring at the opposite ends of the train. The simultaneity of these two events is observed by an observer on the ground at rest, but is not confirmed by an observer moving with the train. This image is often used to explain Lorenz's transformations and Minkowski's diagrams, both useful to conceptualize the relation between the observations of different observers. Stump and Kretzmann, however, use the example to support their argument for the relativity or even incommensurability of different observations of one event, not to illustrate how the different observation can be made compatible by the use of TR. They develop their argument very carefully from the innocent assertion that one observation differs from the other to a paradoxical statement about logical values: "we will have to say that the same two lightning flashes occur at the same time and do not occur at the same time; that is, it will be both true and false that these two lightning flashes occur at the same time" (Stump and Kretzmann 1987:229). This subtle, but far-reaching, step from difference in observation to logically opposing formulations is exploited even further:

[I]f we persist in asking whether or not the two lightning bolts are really simultaneous, we are asking an incoherent question, one that cannot be answered. The question is asked about what is assumed to be a feature of reality, although in fact there is no such feature of reality; such a question is on a par with 'Is Uris Library really to the left of Morrill Hall?' There is no absolute state of being temporally simultaneous with, any more than there is an absolute state of being to the left of (Stump and Kretzmann 1987:229).

Although Stump and Kretzmann are correct in denying the coherence of the question about simultaneity observed from different frames of reference, their practical conclusion is not to abandon the question or use Lorenz's transformations to make sense of the difference, but to accept that the answers can be contradictory and still be true within a well-defined system. This subtle but questionable move allows them to combine their previous argument about separation between the temporal realm and that of eternity and their desire to formulate simultaneity between temporal and eternal events. They use the shift from difference in observation to difference in logical value to abolish their own argument about the impossibility of E-T simultaneity in which an eternal entity can be simultaneous with all the time states of any temporal entity.

Their solution is based on the insight, taken from STR, that one's frame of reference determines the outcome of observation. By establishing that there can be contradictory observations in different frames, the E-T simultaneity shown to be impossible by them is possible, *in spite* of the contradictions it involves: "The definition (of E-T simultaneity) must be constructed in terms of two reference frames and two observers" (Stump and Kretzmann 1987:230). The introduction of two observers takes care of all possible contradictions that might arise. The proposed conclusion then is that "the entire life of any eternal entity is coexistent with any temporal entity at any time at which that temporal entity exists" (Stump and Kretzmann 1987:232), which is similar to the classical formulations of the relationship between time and eternity as analogous to that between the circumference and the center of a circle, a notion that has nothing to do with STR and cannot claim its support in any respect. In fact, if we allow such use of the theory of relativity, it could be used to smooth out contradiction in any conceivable argument, not only arguments concerning time. It is their special interpretation of STR, rather than its scientific merits, that gives Stump and Kretzmann support for positing E-T simultaneity and arguments for God's eternity. Their misuse of STR is even more serious than this.

Stump and Kretzmann refer to STR to find support for introducing the idea of two different points of view in reference to a single event. However, what is not warranted by STR is their conclusion that the observation of different observers can be contradictory in all cases. Rather, in STR, contradictory observations can be obtained for only a limited group of cases. Thus, by using STR without full understanding, Stump and Kretzmann inadvertently contradict their own position. What they need STR for could be delivered simply by referring to the relativity of right and left for different observers. Such a trivial example would not, however, give them the credibility they need. Their interpretation of STR, in my opinion, does not give them the desired credibility either, and if we take seriously their effort to combine theology and physics, we have to draw consequences from the use of STR that contradict their argument about God's eternity.

The passage quoted above (about the relativity of left and right) suggests a gross oversimplification in the interpretation of STR. Although it is possible to describe through the use of STR a situation where event A precedes B for a first observer, and B precedes A for a second observer, each in different frames of reference, such a pair of events and set of observers is a very special case. This special case cannot be used for the purpose Stump and

Kretzmann have in mind. Any two events that can be observed by one observer in an A-B sequence and by another in a B-A sequence are necessarily *causally unrelated*. *Causally related* events A-B are *always* seen as A-B sequence regardless of the frame of reference. Different observers can measure different time between A and B, but the sequence for causally connected events can *never be reverted*. “Special relativity predicts disagreement among inertial observers about where and when things occur, but there can never be a disagreement about whether or not causal relation is possible” (Mook and Vargish 1987:107). Therefore the use of the relativity of right and left for an exposition of the implications of STR is misleading. We must conclude that Stump and Kretzmann do not successfully disprove their own argument about the impossibility of E-T simultaneity for all cases. There is only a limited group of cases in which observers in different frames can have contradictory observations: only causally unrelated events can be observed this way.

Therefore Stump and Kretzmann use STR as a support for holding together two contradictory statements, e.g., right-left and (for their argument more important and assumed) before-after. By doing so they unconsciously *limit* the application of STR in their argument to cases that are not causally related. If we follow their line of reasoning we must conclude that, if their reason for introducing STR was to combine a temporal realm containing past, present and future with an eternal now of God, their success is only partial and that *causally related events escaped their argument*. Yet the causal relation, God’s involvement in time, is the problem they want to solve.

Some could defend Stump and Kretzmann’s position as a mere suggestion of analogy between STR and theology. Differing observations are held together in STR and Stump and Kretzmann seem to suggest that similar contradictions might be admissible to theological discourse as well. I do not think, however, that such a defense is good enough to save their argument. Any use of scientific theory in another field, such as theology, borrows the credibility of the scientific theory. But the credibility of scientific theory is based on its coherent interpretation of phenomena and on its connections to other physical theories. If STR were not a coherent theory and was applicable only to a limited number of cases without clear specifications of what the margins of applicability are, its explanatory power would be significantly diminished, if not completely lost. Analogically, if STR is used within a theological argument, the argument benefits from the credibility STR gains in its scientific setting. However, if we chose to use only a part of STR, disregard-

ing some of its implications, or if we even wrongly generalize one of the possible outcomes of STR, its explanatory power is significantly diminished (if not lost) and the argument does not benefit from the credibility STR has within science at all. We can say that the use of one part of scientific discourse entails an obligation to expand the scope of theological discourse to other parts of that discourse.

Concretely, if STR is used as part of a theological argument, it carries over not only the authority it has in the scientific realm, but also the limitation and possible falsification to which STR is subjected. Following this methodologically crucial rule, we must conclude that the interpretation of STR Stump and Kretzmann present, narrows their possible argument to causally unrelated events. Their intention, however, is to posit a coherent concept of an eternal deity and to proceed to an argument about how such an eternal deity causally interacts with the temporal world (Stump and Kretzmann 1987:239). Unfortunately, any concept of eternity and E-T simultaneity arrived at by their particular use of STR, cannot be used for a discussion about actions in the world. By unconsciously limiting their concept of E-T simultaneity to causally nonrelated events, Stump and Kretzmann make their STR-based argument useless.

Brian Leftow's use of STR

Unlike Stump's and Kretzmann's use of STR, Leftow's argument for the eternality of God does not use STR in a merely analogical way. Leftow attempts to base God's eternity on STR. Such a heavy investment in the physical theory is, as I have already pointed out, risky business, since the argument is vulnerable to any alternation that might be carried out by scientific reformulations of the theory. Unfortunately, it will become clear that Leftow misuses STR in a way just as serious as that of Stump and Kretzmann.

He opens his argument by positing several things about God. As eternal, God is able to see all events in the world in God's eternity, which denies any ontological distinction between past, present, and future. Leftow explains this concept through a variation on another classical doctrine of God. "Traditional theists affirm that God has no spatial location" (Leftow 1991:161). "No spatial location" is used by Leftow as a basis for further development of his argument. He suggests that it is possible to conclude that "the distance between God and any spatial being is zero" (Leftow 1991:161). Leftow calls this position the "zero thesis" and uses it as the starting point for his argument. It is questionable, however, whether this basic point is correct.

Leftow himself recognizes that to move from a proposition about God as a non-spatial being to the zero thesis might involve a category mistake: If God is a non-spatial being, it is not possible to assign any spatial relation to God, or to say that there is any spatial relation between God and spatial entities. However, he defends his “zero thesis”: “But a distance zero is just an absence of distance; that we can assert a zero distance in a positive, existential form is just a consequence of the fact that we use the word ‘distance’ in denying distance” (Leftow 1991:162).

Even if we decide to let Leftow interpret God’s nonspatiality as “zero distance” from all members of the spatial order, we cannot use this thesis as a basis for an argument using STR. Leftow’s position is an unacceptable oversimplification from a theological point of view because it forces God into spacial categories and it violates the presuppositions on which STR is based. William Craig suggests that inferring from a non-spatial God to Leftow’s “zero thesis” is as mistaken as inferring from the denial of the category of velocity of ether to the immobility of ether. He writes:

When Einstein denied a velocity of state of motion of the ether, he was emphatically *not* ascribing to it the property of immobility. For that would be to admit that the ether constitutes a reference frame, as Lorenz claimed, and therefore serves in virtue of its immobility as a privileged frame relative to which absolute motion, simultaneity and length exist (Craig 1994:21).

It is clear that Leftow’s “zero thesis” is supposed to establish such a privileged frame of reference where relativity would not cause any problems. God’s “zero” distance from all members of the universe is not conceivable from the point of view of TR. Craig’s criticism, in my opinion, invalidates Leftow’s position because STR explicitly denies such a possibility. If Leftow wants to work with the notion of a privileged frame of reference, he loses the right to refer to STR in support of his theory. Nevertheless, Leftow claims that the “zero thesis” allows him to ascribe a privileged frame of reference for God, since “there is no change of any sort involving spatial, material entities unless there is also a change of place, i.e. a motion involving some material entity” (Leftow 1991:162). A God who is at “zero” distance from every material entity would then, by definition, be without change relative to those entities, even if those entities are in relative motion to each other. God, according to Leftow, creates God’s own referential frame that is privi-

leged with respect to any other frame—a position contradicting the basic claims of STR.

Yet, Leftow's position is in even more direct disagreement with STR. Physical referential frames as understood in STR cannot be compared and related to such a God-created frame. All the frames of reference in STR must have a time component. If the time component is missing, as is the case in God's frame of reference, it is highly doubtful that we can still speak about a frame of reference that is comparable to the frames of reference of STR. Leftow is, in my view, not justified in positing a referential frame on the mixture of classical theism and physical theories about matter and time-space and then using it as part of STR. As I have pointed out in the methodological section of this essay, STR as a physical theory avoids any reference to nonmaterial entities that can interact with the rest of the system described. In addition to these problems, Leftow does not address how causal relations between God and the material world can fit into his system.

In spite of complex arguments, Leftow's contribution to the discussion of God's eternity—namely his “zero thesis”—does not succeed in establishing a privileged referential frame for God. The failure to do so does not seem to be due to lack of ingenuity, but instead due to the fact that it is impossible to hold together a system that is so heavily based on STR and has a privileged frame of reference. (This criticism applies as well to the Stump and Kretzmann article.) In Graig's words:

Again, I feel constrained to say that if God's “frame of reference” is not literally a reference frame, there is no reference frame in which all events are present and actual, since there are in every frame space-time regions designated absolute future or absolute past as determined by the light-cone structure at any event. The only thing corresponding to God's “frame of reference” as described by Leftow, so far as I can see, is Einstein's relativistic ether, the space-time manifold itself (Craig 1994:34).

But the space-time manifold cannot possibly function as a basis for God's relation to the world, even if it theoretically and logically allows for omnipresence, eternality, and omniscience, because it implies the notion of a block universe with deterministic properties, a notion which is theologically doubtful if not dangerous. If we would take Leftow's “zero” thesis seriously

and posit God's eternity, God's omnipotence and, in fact, any possibility of God's action in the world, becomes unintelligible.

Stump and Kretzmann, as well as Leftow, are caught by the problem of how to relate a timeless God to a dynamic universe. They think that STR, which destroys the notion of absolute simultaneity and posits "flowing time" instead of the given and independent time of the Newtonian universe, provides a solution for their problem. STR or GTR are not, however, proofs or even arguments for a timeless view of the universe, which could become God's frame of reference. The time-space manifold TR is using is a theoretical construct that does not have any meaning outside of the theory. To project such a theoretical construction of the time-space manifold as God's place in the universe is to commit a so-called "fallacy of misplaced concreteness." The methodological limitations of theoretical constructs such as the "relativistic universe" must not be forgotten in our attempts to use such constructs in our understanding of the world. Process philosophy suggests that such forgetfulness is often the reason for errors in our descriptions of the world and introduces the term "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" where we make concrete what is meant only as methodological abstraction.

Hence, I will investigate how process thinkers dealt with the concept of God in the context of a scientifically understood universe.

PROCESS THEOLOGY AND THE THEORY OF RELATIVITY

The previous two attempts to use STR in arguments concerning God's eternity showed the limitations and problems of such attempts and provided little insight into the theological problems in question. However, the very fact that STR is used in theological arguments shows that even authors who do not hold that a theological claim must be fully coherent with our experience of the physical world, do see the ultimate relatedness of the solutions theology and science bring. Process theology has always claimed that coherence with the facts of physical experience is the condition *sine qua non* for any contemporary theology (or philosophy). Difficulties in relating TR to the notion of God are therefore especially challenging for process thinkers. Although many process treatments of God do not specifically refer to TR, the implications of physical theories, including TR, are assumed and struggled with throughout the whole of process theology.

Process theology, unlike the classical theism defended in the previously quoted articles, does not hold that God is merely eternal, but asserts the temporality of God in its consequent pole.⁶ Since the previous two examples tried to use STR to establish divine eternity, it would seem that process theology will benefit from not having to go through the apparently incoherent process of relating eternity to temporality in the context of relativistic physics. However, the mere fact that process theology understands God as temporal as well as eternal does not help much in finding a coherent interpretation of God and the relativistic universe.

The problem at hand seems to be similar to that in both the above cases: How can we find a place for God, so that God's perception and actions are not affected by the relativistic nature of time-space? Many attempts have been made, some resembling Leftow's "zero thesis" (and these are possibly vulnerable to the same criticism). Lewis Ford, for example, suggests:

First of all, it must be recognized that God is neither at rest nor in motion. These concepts can only apply to societies or series of occasions, not to an individual occasion. Two societies are at rest with respect to one another if and only if successive paired occasions reiterate the same spatial distance from one another.... Motion is a function of change which is function of the difference between successive occasions. A single actual entity does not change and thus cannot move; it only becomes.... Since God is a single actual entity, he is exempt from either rest or motion (Ford 1968:130).

Yet even if it is correct to say that God is exempt from rest or motion, the main reason to introduce such an understanding of God is to allow for God's activity in the world. Whitehead's conception of God as an activity principle in each actual entity does exactly this, though the whole concept is questioned through a discussion of whether we should understand God as a single actual occasion or a society of actual occasions in time. The problem of God's activity is therefore, for process theology, the starting point and not

⁶This position is not shared by all process theologians, but is gradually becoming the standard position in spite of Whitehead's initial remarks about the non-temporal God in *Religion in the Making* (Whitehead 1930:88). It is apparent that in RM, Whitehead had in mind the primordial nature of God and did not take into consideration the consequent one in this particular passage.

the blind alley Leftow arrives at with his “zero thesis” and Stump and Kretzmann fall into.

God genuinely influences and alters the experience of every occasion, and thus conceptually must be present through space and not at a distance if our concept is to be in agreement with the theory of relativity. Ivor Leclerc makes an interesting point about this issue: “This means that Whitehead has made a metaphysical distinction between, on the one hand, the plurality of acting physical entities, and on the other, a ‘general activity’ underlying all the occasions of individual acting, and of which each of them is an ‘individualization’” (Leclerc 1985:304).

Even if we accept the suggestion that God is the general activity underlying every activity in this world, it is not clear how we can conceive of the varying experiences of God if perspectives differ relative to the different locations God occupies. Furthermore, process theism is clear about the fact that the future is always nonexistent, opened, which is not easily reconcilable with certain interpretations of STR (if the line dividing past and future is relative for relatively moving observers). The principles of relativity seems to introduce at least some incoherent data into God’s experience. The problem can be phrased as well in term of God’s prehension: God prehends only actual occasions that have, after the concrescence stage, achieved satisfaction. But there is no clear way to distinguish which actual occasions have and which have not reached that stage, according to STR.⁷

In contrast to the two previous cases, process theology directly addresses two issues that were left unaddressed by Stump, Kretzmann, and Leftow: divine action in this spatio-temporal world, and the ontological difference between past and future as a necessary basis for human freedom.

However, there are difficulties even with the process understanding of divine action. If we accept Whitehead’s famous thesis that God should not be made an exception to general metaphysical principles, we must ask how we can hold both definitions of contemporaries as causally independent occasions, and of God as a contemporary to all occasions, *and* be able to influence all of them at the same time. Clearly there is a problem in the con-

⁷Yet the difficulties with dividing the reality (and the observation of reality) for God into past and present did not lead process theology to suggest any kind of “block universe” solution as it seems to be the case with any solution that defends God’s eternity where future is as defined for God as past. Such a solution would, according to process theology, be in tension with human freedom.

cept of divine causation in the process understanding of God, perhaps parallel to the initial problem Stump, Kretzmann, and Leftow tried to solve. The underlying notion of God as a single occasion that does not achieve the state of satisfaction and stays in the state of concrescence threatens the notion of genuine distinction between past, present, and future for God. This problem is partly resolved by the introduction of the primordial and consequent nature of God, where the consequent is subject to temporal categories, but it is not enough to make the process notion of God compatible with STR.⁸

The only possible solution that has been proposed is an introduction of the influences that occur on supra-luminal velocities. Such a solution goes beyond the claims of STR, which postulates the velocity of light as a final velocity for processes in our world, but in general does not require the abolition of STR. It can be appended as an auxiliary hypothesis without collapsing the standard interpretation which is valid for the material world within certain limits. Since TR is very clear about the fact that there is no causal relation possible in velocities faster than that of light, Whitehead's suggestion is that the information transferred on supra-luminal velocities is practically negligible. This step of Whitehead shows that the coherence with experiential data is crucial for process theology.

The most important methodological step is Whitehead's rejection of the idea that TR is a *metaphysically binding* theory. TR is treated very seriously as an empirical scientific theory, but is denied the final word in describing the interaction between the world and God. Methodologically, process thinking takes a very different route from the one taken by Stump, Kretzmann, and Leftow. It does not start with metaphysical presuppositions about the eternity and immutability of God that must be shown to be compatible with STR even if it means violating the internal coherence of TR. Instead, process thinking starts with an empirical theory, and only at the point where the theory clearly does not fit the experiential data (like the experiences of God's involvement in the world) it reaches to an auxiliary hypothesis, one that has some chance of being accepted in the next stage of an empirical description of our world. Whitehead does not want to accept the metaphysical claims of TR: that the speed of light is the fastest possible causal relation in our world in all circumstances, invariantly.

⁸Unlike classical theism, which is not methodologically dependent on the full compatibility with scientific theories, process theism is genuinely threatened by tensions between scientific explanations and claims about God.

The solution Whitehead suggests is to see both a physical and a mental pole in all actual occasions. He writes:

Although the antecedence and the consequence—the past, the present and the future—still hold equally for physical and mental poles, yet the relations of the mental poles to each other are not subject to the same laws of perspective as are those of the physical poles. Measurable time and measurable space are then irrelevant to their mutual connections. Thus in respect to some types of appearance there may be an element of immediacy in its relations to the mental side of the contemporary world (Whitehead 1961:248).

This auxiliary hypothesis of influences with supra-luminal exchange has some support from the scientific community. Stapp (Stapp and Jones 1977:174) uses Bell's theorem⁹ as a possible indication that quantum physics already points in the direction of supra-luminal transfers.

This solution of our problem is outlined by David Griffin (Griffin 1992:20–36) and seems to be sound from a methodological point of view. Process thought attempts to follow all the implications of TR, which is a proper approach to relating science and theology. But two additional steps are taken: a refusal to understand STR as a metaphysical description of reality, and the introduction of an auxiliary (though unproven) hypothesis. The history of scientific discovery shows that exactly these two steps have been taken as a standard procedure in cases where theories reach their explanatory limits (suggesting a limitations of theory at hand and introduction of an auxiliary hypothesis that corrects the theory for cases excluded by the suggested limitations). The scientific progress as described by Lakatos is always following this general pattern (Lakatos 1970).

However, the very fact that there are cases for which auxiliary hypotheses must be introduced, indicates flaws in the system, ones that cannot be identified from within the system. Therefore, Harsthorne felt pessimistic about the possibility of constructing a viable system that would combine TR and theism:

⁹Bell's theorem describes an unexpected order in observable spin attributes of electrons. The order is clearly beyond possible chance, but causal connections that could bring that order are ruled out by a relativistic understanding of the universe. The tentative conclusion Stapp makes, is that more is involved than causal a connection operating on relativistic terms.

I also agree that relating the divine becoming to the problem of simultaneity in physics exceeds my capacity... I feel incapable of solving the problem, and it seems clear that Whitehead did not solve it (Schilpp 1991:642 and 724).

LANGUAGE-BASED POSTMODERN THEOLOGICAL RESPONSES TO STR

To complete the overview of uses of TR in theological arguments, I shall briefly touch upon Carver Yu's linguistic use of TR. He is using TR in a way that directly contradicts the Stump and Kretzmann approach and is, for this reason, a fitting illustration of how wide-ranging the misuse of scientific theories for theological reasoning can be.

Yu not only welcomes the challenge presented by STR for theology, but he even suggests that STR should be used as a conceptual model for theology. His radical proposition is based on the fact that STR has many invariant features and that the core of STR is in fact the unexpected behavior of light. Light has the same (invariant) velocity in any referential frame. STR then becomes, for Yu, a theory of invariance, which allows him to make a metaphysical twist and speak about the invariant revelation of God as if it were somehow connected to the theory of relativity or even supported by it. He must have a very strong notion of metaphysical necessity of the *analogia entis* to make such suggestion. However, this positive use of *analogia entis* is in tension with otherwise clear Barthian motives in his arguments. The principle of relativity caused by invariance points toward a transcendence for Yu. His argument is summed up in the following quote:

If representations of reality from different reference frames are equally faithful, they [different observers] would discover... that the form of their equation is fundamentally the same. This is because the general laws of nature that they apply are expressed by equations which hold good for all frames. At the same time, as soon as they come to know the details of the physical conditions of each of the different frames of reference, they can identify one with the others through transformations. That is, the variables in each of the reference frames are translatable from one to another (Yu 1994:194).

Yu claims that from invariant law we can compute noncontradictory observations, using Lorenz's transformations for example (contra Stump and

Kretzmann). This argument, however, is acceptable only after qualification, which Yu never mentions. It is valid only in certain cases. It is not always possible to translate the observation we are making into the other observations. The qualification Yu did not see or offer is that the observer does not only observe the phenomena, but has all the information about the referential frame that generates the phenomena available. Only the combination of observations and the conditions in which these observations were made allows one to make the computations to which Yu refers. Even with the invariant properties of the laws of nature, we are often not able to compute the *invariant* state of affairs, since we miss some part of the data. Being a distant observer and not a privileged one, we have access only to the data which are appropriate for our situation. We do not have enough information to make the relativistic transformation to arrive at the invariant data Yu is looking for. Therefore, even if Yu is right in saying that it is possible to transform the observation of a particular observer using invariant laws, he mistakenly presupposes that the additional data are available.

In order to make Yu's theory applicable, a privileged observer who has all the information available is needed. However, as we have shown in the cases above, that is not warranted and in fact discredits any reference to STR. Such an all-knowing observer would play the role of a privileged observer, which is explicitly denied by STR.

The reason that Yu does not discover his argument's fatal flaw is that his focus is solely on theology rather than on the interaction between theology and science. We can see how well his assertion of invariant laws works if we talk only about the invariability of God's revelation.

Thus the core of Yu's argument, alleging a link between the invariant speed of light and the invariant nature of God, is nothing more than a rhetorical attempt to use the authority of physical theory for his own theological agenda. From linking the invariant speed of light and the invariant nature of God, Yu proceeds to the question of different understandings of God's revelation in different cultural contexts. But even he is aware that a direct comparison of the relativity of cultural values and the theory of relativity is taking it too far. But instead of altering his own position, Yu criticizes Sally McFague, who too easily slips from the insight of STR to the conclusion that all our knowledge is *our* knowledge and subject to the limitations of the human mind and body, and that there are no absolute measurements possible (Yu 1994:183). Such criticism correctly targets the illegitimacy of a move from STR and its idea of relativity to the sociocultural con-

ditions that are recognized as particular and relative only from the higher transcending plane of a judge who can see the incompatibility, thus making the relativity embedded in them at least approachable. It seems to me, however, that Yu criticizes McFague for pointing to relativity in a social context, only to carry out an argument based on the same mistake. Yu tries to point toward invariance, arguing from STR to invariant dimensions of God's revelation in different sociocultural contexts, and thus makes the same methodological step that transgresses any possible use of TR. Consequently TR is not represented in his presentation as a scientific theory, but only as a pool of ideas we can choose from without any commitment to its larger framework. However, coherence with other scientific ideas and with the field as such is a necessary condition for the validity of any theory. By disregarding this connection to the context of physics, Yu misuses the authority STR carries.

CONCLUSION

Contemplating the difficulties involved in relating the theory of relativity to the concept of God, we might be justified in asking whether it is really necessary to take the theory of relativity into account while arguing about God. We might ask the fundamental question whether the theory of relativity gives us a true picture of the nature of space and time, or whether it is simply a construction that successfully allows us to compute and predict observable phenomena, which would not be of crucial interest for theology. As the theory of relativity made the Newtonian description of the universe a description limited to certain conditions, the next theory will assume both Newton's and Einstein's advances as special cases in a broader context of reality.

I do not think that we should look forward to that as a cheap confirmation of theological ideas, since there is no guarantee that the problems a new theory presents will be easily reconcilable with religious views. It has been the case in the last millennium that scientific revolutions brought only new and less-easily solved problems for theology. Quantum physics is one of the examples. On the other hand, the impressive achievements of physics in the last century should not lead us to assume that physics is allowed to make ontological and generally metaphysical claims any more than is theology.

Quantum physics certainly pushes the problem of the relation of the category of time to God even further, and the discussion seems to be more and

more difficult since the most advanced research in physics seems to allow for systems that abandon the notion of space-time altogether as a mere effect of matter at a certain level of magnitude. To infer that there is no time and space for us or for our understanding of God, however, would again be to make concrete what is meant as methodological abstraction. It is not certain that, even in the case of quantum gravity, the disappearance of time is ontological or only apparent.

The strong criticism of several attempts to relate TR and theological ideas in this essay should not be understood as a claim that such interdisciplinary work is not possible. Not only it is possible, but it is desperately needed. The point this essay wanted to make is that interdisciplinary work is possible only if the methodological rules of both disciplines are recognized and followed. If neither theology nor science is violated and some small common ground is explored, both partners in the dialogue will benefit.

REFERENCES

- Augustine
1950 *The City of God*. The Modern Library of the World's Best Books. Modern Library Grants, 74. New York: Modern Library.
- Boethius
1963 *The Consolation of Philosophy: In the Translation of I. T.* Edited and introduced by William Anderson. Centaur Classics. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Craig, William Lane
1994 "The Special Theory of Relativity and Theories of Divine Eternity." *Faith and Philosophy* 11, no. 1: 19–37.
- Ford, Lewis S.
1968 "Is Process Theism Compatible with Relativity Theory?" *The Journal of Religion* 48: 124–35.
- Griffin, David Ray
1992 "Hartshorne, God, and Relativity Physics." *Process Studies* 21: 85–112.
- Lakatos, Imre
1970 "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research

Programmes." *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*. edited by Imre Lakatos, and Allan Musgrave, 91–196. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leclerc, Ivor
1985

"The Problem of God in Whitehead's System." *Process Studies* 14, no. 4: 301–15.

Leftow, Brian
1991

"Eternity and Simultaneity." *Faith and Philosophy* 8: 148–79.

Lewis, Delmas
1988

"Eternity, Time and Tenselessness [in Boethuis, Anselm, and Aquinas]." *Faith and Philosophy* 5: 72–86.

Lucas, J. R.
1993

"The Temporality of God." In *Quantum Cosmology and the Laws of Nature*. edited by R. J. Russell, Nancey C. Murphy, and C. Isham, 235–46. Vatican: Vatican Obs. Publ., Notre Dame Press.

Mach, Ernst
1960

The Science of Mechanics: A Critical and Historical Account of its Development. 6th ed., with revisions through the 9th German ed. LaSalle: Open Court.

Mook, Delo E., and Thomas Vargish
1987

Inside Relativity. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Morris, Thomas V.
1987

The Concept of God. Oxford Readings in Philosophy. Oxford Oxfordshire. New York: Oxford University Press.

Padget, Allan G.
1992

God, Eternity and the Nature of Time. New York: St. Martin Press.

Peters, Ted
1993

"The Trinity in and Beyond Time." In *Quantum Cosmology and the Laws of Nature*. edited by R. J. Russell, Nancey C. Murphy, and C. Isham, 263–93. Vatican: Vatican Obs. Publ., Notre Dame Press.

Senor, Thomas D.
1990

"Incarnation and Timelessness." *Faith and Philosophy* 7: 149–

64.

Schilpp, Arthur

1991

Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne. Library of living philosophers ed. La Salle: Open Court.

Stapp, Henry Pierce, and edited by William B. Jones

1977

"Quantum Mechanics, Local Causality and Process Philosophy." *Process Studies* 7, no. 3: 173–81.

Stump, Eleonor, and Norman Kretzmann

1987

"Eternity." *The Concept of God*. Thomas V Morris, 219–52. Oxford Oxfordshire. New York: Oxford University Press.

Whitehead, Alfred North

1930

Religion in the Making; Lowell lectures. Cambridge: University Press.

CCC

1961

Adventures of Ideas. New York: The Free Press.

Yu, Carver T.

1994

"The Principle of Relativity as a Conceptual Tool in Theology." In *Science and Theology: Questions at the interface*. edited by Murray Rae, Hillary Regan, and John Stenhouse, 180–211. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

John Calvin, Huguenot?

GALEN JOHNSON

INTRODUCTION

THE REFORMATION ENCOUNTERED HARSH RESISTANCE IN FRANCE BECAUSE OF the unique relationship forged between church and state in that country by the sixteenth century. After the permanent relocation of the papacy from Avignon to Rome in 1414, the French crown defended national honor by supporting the conciliarist movement that would limit papal authority. For instance, the Pragmatic Sanction of 1438 allowed French clergy to elect their own bishops, in essence voiding direct papal influence over the government of the French church. However, the 1516 Concordat of Bologna restored the pope's right to tax the French clergy in exchange for the pope's agreement to accept the king's appointments to the highest clerical offices (Rothrock 1979:xxiv). This left the French crown in the comfortable position of having the support of the papacy yet independence from it in national affairs, even those of the church. G. A. Rothrock describes the result of this upon French Christianity:

In France,... by the sixteenth century the social and political implications of religious dissent were enormous. Within the general pattern of Roman Catholic Christianity a Gallican Church had developed that was both self-conscious and aggressive.... The close alliance of church and state in France had not precluded some bitter church-state quarrels; but despite this the alliance of the French Crown and the Roman Catholic Church was one of the wellsprings of the national identity (1979:xxiii-xxxv).

The crown most strongly demonstrated its willingness to defend this orderly arrangement—and thus avoid the kind of fragmentation introduced into Germany by Lutheranism—following the Affair of the Placards (1534). In the

interest of preserving order, King Francis I ordered no less than thirty-five Protestant “evangelicals” to be burned to death after placards accosting Catholicism appeared in Paris, and hundreds of others with proto-Protestant sympathies fled the country for safety. One of them was a brilliant young lawyer from Noyon, John Calvin, who for the rest of his life sought to distinguish for the monarchy between the radicals who architected the Placards Affair and the peaceful adherents of the developing Reformed faith. Calvin’s ultimate failure to win the crown’s favor produced in him such a complete identification with those losing their lives and freedom in France that their plight increasingly consumed him—ministerially and ultimately physically. Some scholars have argued that Calvin became so sensitive to the plight of the French Protestants, or Huguenots, that in the end he sanctioned the use of force to win toleration. However, a close examination of Calvin’s preoccupation with the Huguenots’ situation over the course of his writings suggests that he consistently urged them to be faithful unto death—and thereby sympathetically hastened his own death. To facilitate an appreciation of this preoccupation, Calvin’s escalating involvement with the Huguenots and political affairs in France will be traced developmentally, through sub-headings corresponding to significant stages in the development of Calvin’s thought.

THE FOUNDATION OF CALVIN’S THEORY OF NONVIOLENCE

1532: *Commentary on Seneca’s De Clementia*

Calvin’s interest in political matters predated the Affair of the Placards, and so his statements on magistrates and their responsibilities after that time cannot be said to be solely reactionary. Instead, they follow a train of thought Calvin first pursued in 1532 with his *Commentary on Seneca’s De Clementia*. This commentary, written at the age of twenty-three, “serves as perhaps the best evidence that by 1532, Calvin had become an accomplished master in the ancient art of rhetoric and in its reconceptualization in the world of Renaissance humanism” (Jones 1995:16). Humanist studies and interest in church reforms often went hand-in-hand; according to Pierre Courthial, there were two strands of reforming interests in France when Calvin began to write professionally—one which remained Roman Catholic, such as the circle of Bishop Guillaume Briçonnet in Meaux, and another more sympathetic to the first generation of Protestant leaders like Martin Luther and particularly Ulrich Zwingli (1982:76). Obviously, Calvin’s expression of faith

developed in the direction of the latter. The *Commentary on Seneca* was written around the time of Calvin's full conversion to Protestantism and did not yet betray the fullness of Reformed conviction he would soon hold dear. Here, Calvin outlined the difference between the lawful rule of kings and tyranny—namely, that while the first is directed toward public usefulness, the second is toward private advantage (1998a:152). While it is possible that Calvin had Francis I in mind, more likely he was writing theoretically in what John T. McNeill calls the "Mirror of Princes" genre of literature (e.g., Erasmus' *Christian Prince*) of late medieval humanism (1949:154). In 1532, Calvin really did not have excessive cause to rail against Francis. Indeed, the *Commentary on Seneca* showed a fundamental respect for the authority of rulers that carried over to the first edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536), even in light of the Placards Affair.

1536: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

Between the *Commentary on Seneca* and the first appearance of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin's full conversion to evangelical faith actually lent itself to an even greater respect for magisterial authority. He came to view that authority as divinely given and thus inviolable. In the *Institutes'* prefatory address to Francis, Calvin said that any of the Protestant faithful who were wrongly molested would receive some future divine vindication, but he threatened no physical retribution of an earthly sort and closes by invoking, "May the Lord, the King of Kings, establish your throne in righteousness, and your dominion in equity, most illustrious King" (1960:31). The loyalty expressed in the preface to Francis is consistent with *Seneca* and Calvin's interpretation of scripture. The aftermaths of the Placards Affair and the Peasants Revolt in Münster had shown Calvin that violent rebellion was counterproductive to the cause of religious reform. If Francis had reacted violently to the Placards incident, how much more so would he respond to "guerilla" methods of obtaining tolerance?

The king was in the habit of consolidating power through treaty. Though not in theological agreement with the Lutheran princes of Germany, he nonetheless signed a peace accord with them in January 1534 because they shared his dislike for Emperor Charles V (Francis had been overlooked for the office and was briefly imprisoned by Charles in Spain). Calvin hoped to appeal to Francis's *Politique* sensitivities by pointing out that the Reformed cause had political no less than theological advantages. If Reformed theology were more biblical than Roman Catholic theology, Francis would ac-

crue divine favor by adopting it. If Francis would at least tolerate Reformed Christians rather than persecute them—since they sought the good of the state and not its ill—he would take an important step in insuring domestic tranquility. Trained as a lawyer and skillful in rhetoric, Calvin originally believed he could win Francis’s favor through argumentation alone. As matters turned out, says Alister E. McGrath, this was “a serious misjudgment” (1993:191).

Calvin informed Francis in his prefatory address to the *Institutes* that he did not originally intend to provide the *Institutes* to the king, but then, he said, “I perceived that the fury of certain wicked persons [presumably those involved in the Placards Affair] has prevailed so far in your realm that there is no place in it for sound doctrine. Consequently, it seemed to me that I should be doing something worth-while if I both gave instruction to them and made confession before you with the same work” (1960:9). The purpose of the dedication was clearly to exonerate the followers of Calvin from culpability in the Placards Affair and to assure the king of their continued loyalty and cooperation. Indeed, Calvin offered that for any persons who did attempt to subvert the king’s authority under religious pretensions, “there are laws and legal penalties by which they may be severely restrained according to their deserts” (1960:30). By contrast, those of true Reformed persuasion would surrender quietly to their own executions—even though they were falsely accused—before they would rise up against the king. Calvin advised his readers in a 1539 addition to the *Institutes*: “It is not for us to remedy such evils;... only this remains, to implore the Lord’s help, in whose hands are the hearts of kings, and the changing of kingdoms [Prov 21:1]” (1960:1516–7). Calvin’s use of the first-person “us” reflected his sympathetic identification with those living in France.

Already, however, Calvin realized that he spoke from his position as theological leader of the Reformed cause rather than out of the consensus of those French Protestants actually living under threat of persecution. He explained in the *Institutes* that although few readily accepted the idea, bad kings were as deserving of obedience as just ones, and he invoked Daniel 2:21,37; 5:18, Ezekiel 2:37, et al., as scriptural evidence that all ruling authority is granted by God. Calvin was primarily a biblicist in his hermeneutical approach; he expected systematic study of any subject found in the Bible to give clear evidence of the divine will on that matter, and since Scripture alone can reveal God’s will, it is trustworthy and should be heeded without question. Calvin’s investigation of the Bible on the issue

of secular authority taught him that although the *person* of the king might not be worthy of allegiance, his *office* always is. "All that has been assigned to us," Calvin said, again with first person language, "is to obey and suffer" (1991:82). Calvin was not ignorant of the trials of his fellow countrymen: "I recognize full well the gravity and the immediacy of the perils which threaten [those who show] the constancy I demand; I know that kings are not prepared to tolerate any defiance and that their anger is a messenger of death" (1991:84). Notwithstanding, Calvin was even more sensitive to doctrinal consistency that exalted the sovereignty of God than to the cries of his followers: "Let us therefore derive consolation from the thought that we are rendering to God the obedience he demands when we rather suffer all things than to depart from our duty to him" (1991:84). Loyalty to God entailed loyalty to those who partook in his kingly authority, even if they abused it.

There was one allowance for the resistance of ungodly kings, however:

For if there are now any magistrates of the people, appointed to restrain the willfulness of kings (as in ancient times the ephors were set against the Spartan kings, or the tribunes of the people against the Roman consuls, or the demarchs against the senate of the Athenians; and perhaps, as things now are, such power as the three estates exercise in every realm when they hold their chief assemblies), I am so far from forbidding them to withstand, in accordance with their duty, the fierce licentiousness of kings, that, if they wink at kings who violently fall upon and assault the lowly common folk, I declare that their dissimulation involves nefarious perfidy, for by it they dishonestly betray the freedom of the people, of which they know that they have been appointed protectors by God's ordinance (1986:225).

This exception, left open-ended in its potential application in France, obviously derived from historical precedents rather than biblical investigation. Calvin did not accept responsibility for himself to challenge the crown, but a unified front of inferior magistrates apparently might have done so. Not surprisingly, then, winning the support of inferior magistrates would later become an integral part of Calvin's strategy for France.

1539: *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*

Calvin's brief exposition of the rights and responsibilities of magistrates and their subjects found more explicit biblical explanation in his Romans

commentary, which, like the second edition of the *Institutes*, appeared in 1539. Here, Calvin declared it to be illegitimate to speculate *how* a ruler achieved office, for it is enough that the person did. Also, while God had not ordained that government be tyrannical, because God was the one who appoints those in power (cf. Romans 13:1), it was God's responsibility to remove them. This opinion, now seen in Calvin's earliest work, *Seneca*, his magnum opus, the *Institutes*, and his biblical exposition, was common among the early Protestant Reformers. In "On Secular Authority" (1523), Martin Luther said that "superiors are not to be resisted by force" (1991:39), and, while Protestants should not voluntarily surrender their books, nonetheless, "Evil is not to be resisted but suffered" (1991:29). Calvin's aversion to the civil disruptiveness of the Placards Affair was also likely the controlling factor in his rejection of revolutionary methods of resistance. The Affair of the Placards and the assault on Münster in Germany forever linked Anabaptism with revolution in Calvin's own mind, even though the instigators of these events perhaps should be described less as Anabaptists than simply radicals. In fact, most Anabaptists actually held to a pacifism similar in expression to that of Calvin. For instance, Balthasar Hubmaier wrote in "On the Sword" (1527): "Unfit rulers should be tolerated because God has given them to us in his wrath and wants to plague us thus, as being worthy of no better rulers, because of our sins" (1991:206).

The Christian must accept as a personal sacrifice life under an unjust ruler, Calvin said. Commenting on Romans 13:3 ("For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad"), Calvin advised, "Let us then continue to honour the good appointment of God, which may be easily done, provided we impute to ourselves whatever evil may accompany it," for even bad government was better than no government in that it assisted in "consolidating the society of men" (1993b:480). Likewise, when Romans 13:7 instructed, "Pay to all what is due them... honor to whom honor is due," Calvin interpreted, "Now this passage confirms what I have already said,—that we ought to obey kings and governors, whoever they may be, not because we are constrained, but because it is a service acceptable to God; for he will have them not only to be feared, but also honoured by a voluntary respect" (1993b:483). This is all consistent with the *Institutes*, and again with Luther, who believed that Christians should obey the civil magistrate, even when evil, not out of compulsion but to provide an example of humility to their neighbors.

THE CRISIS IN FRANCE

1539–1554: Appeal to the Nobility

Calvin's ministry to French Protestants took on a different form at about the same time he wrote the Romans commentary. Exiled from Geneva in 1538, he served as pastor to a congregation of French refugees in Strasbourg from then until his return to Geneva in 1541. By that time, Calvin had abandoned his hope that a direct appeal to the king might convert him in favor of strengthening the French Protestant movement to a size too large to be bullied. Calvin wrote voluminous letters of encouragement to those in France who would eventually become known as "Huguenots," and the churches within his sphere of influence governed themselves according to the consistorial model of Geneva. The Venetian ambassador to France, Giovanni Michieli, observed at the time, "You would never believe the active correspondence carried all over the kingdom by the principal minister of Geneva, named Calvin, a Frenchman from Picardy, a man who has acquired an extraordinary authority over this sect by his life, his learning, and his writings" (Gray 1981:62).

A significant number of Calvin's letters went to members of the French nobility, particularly Renée, the duchess of Ferrara, to whom eleven letters are extant (Barton 1989:vii). Renée, in turn, offered her palace as an asylum for threatened ministers (Gray 1981:71) even though she never was fully converted to Protestantism. In November 1551, in a letter to Lutheran minister Oswald Myconius, Calvin speculated whether the intercession of Swiss aristocrats would also mollify the king's "cruel" irritation with Protestantism (1998b:336). Yet, significant events were taking place in France that would not allow Calvin completely to divert his attention from the king himself. For instance, in April 1550, the Constable de Montmorency seized control of the Huguenot center of Metz in the name of the new king, Henry II. Calvin revealed awareness in his letters of the burnings of Protestants elsewhere, such as the five in the town of Gascony he mentioned to John Sleidan on August 27, 1554. Although Calvin did not retract his statement in the *Institutes* that the form of government was a matter of indifference, in his *Sermons on Job* (1554) and *Sermons on Deuteronomy* (1554–55), he detailed the history of royal wickedness in the Old Testament and added that such behavior was typical of all kings everywhere (McNeill 1949:40). Nonetheless, when John Knox presented his theory of civil resistance through force in 1554, Calvin reacted negatively. Indeed, Calvin

prevented the selling of Knox's *First Blast of the Trumpet* in Geneva after its publication in 1558 because of "its revolutionary, tyrannicidal character" (Danner 1999:87–89).

Perhaps precisely because resistance by force was not an option for Calvin, by 1555, his opinion toward the French crown was so soured that he told Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's successor as chief pastor of Zurich, how with "horror I shrink from all contact with the king of France" (1998c:211). Of disappointment for the strategy of appeal to lower magistrates was the guilty plea to heresy forced from the Duchess of Ferrara by the king in September 1554. "What can I say," wrote Calvin to Guillaume Farel, "but that an example of constancy is a rare thing among princes?" (1998c:501)

1555–1558: The Conversion of the Bourbons and the Colignys

Even though Calvin himself never clearly espoused revolutionary methods to win religious toleration in France, his stance toward France after 1555 may still be described as militant. "In his extensive correspondence with French congregations, Calvin stressed the importance of organization, not just to present a stronger opposition to enemies and oppressors but also to promote better internal order and to further propagation of the faith" (Rothrock 1979:59). Enough Genevan-trained pastors "leaked" into France that a veritable flood of Calvinist insurgence resulted, and southern France became awash in Reformed sentiment. The number of organized Reformed churches in France grew from five to one hundred between 1555 and 1559 (Courthial 1982:77). Robert Kingdon's research reveals that eighty-eight Frenchmen went to Geneva to be trained by Calvin and Theodore Beza precisely so that they might return to France as missionaries (Gray 1981:65). However, the course of Huguenot non-resistance in France would begin to grind to an end when two key royal houses became Calvinist converts: the Bourbons and the Colignys.

From the Coligny family of Châtillon, the three nephews of Constable Montmorency—d'Andelot, Odet, and Gaspard—provided invaluable diplomatic and tactical supervision for the Huguenots (Gray 1981:73). Gaspard, the Admiral of France, was converted by reading devotional literature while recovering from an illness in 1557. When Calvin learned of his conversion, he wrote to urge him to respond to adversity with patience and sacrifice instead of forceful retaliation (1998c:457). Gaspard Coligny's stature as leader of the Huguenot movement made him the target of assassination in

1572 by the Catholic Guise family, which touched off the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre.

The Bourbon family was especially significant: if the Valois line (that of Francis and Henry) were to come to an end, a Bourbon would be next in line for the throne (Gray 1981:72). Calvin communicated with the Bourbons frequently, especially with Anthony, the King of the French province of Navarre. After the Affair of the Rue St. Jacques on September 4, 1557, when 135 Protestants were arrested while others had their tongues cut out or were even burned, Calvin perfunctorily appealed to King Henry on behalf of the persecuted, but his more urgent appeal was to Anthony. He implored Anthony to become more active in resisting the king (although diplomatically) for the sake of the Huguenots: "Sire, the sighs and groanings of so many true believers certainly deserve to be listened to by you, and that you should take courage to come to their aid, and procure them relief as far as you shall have it in your power" (1998c:382).

"The great majority [of Calvinist converts] were from the artisan and professional classes, chiefly in the towns and cities of southern France. The party's imposing political strength resided in its accessions from the aristocracy, including some of the highest nobles of the land" (Walker 1985:516). Indeed, more and more nobles began to express support for Calvinist doctrine; Alister McGrath thinks this may have been influenced by disaffection with an increasingly poor economy under the king (McGrath 1993:189). But Huguenot conversions were not limited to those in the upper classes; their dissension also stirred strife among the peasantry. Menna Prestwich provides an example:

In May 1558 Jean Macar, a minister of the Paris church, wrote to Calvin "that the fire is lit in all parts of the kingdom and all the water in the sea will not suffice to extinguish it;" shortly afterwards, Calvinist demonstrators occupied the Pré-aux-Clercs on the left bank of the Seine, much frequented by Parisians for evening strolling, and for six nights three to four thousand of the faithful paraded and sang psalms (1985:71-2).

Nobles and commoners, the Huguenots were demonstrating their strength; Calvin hoped that the display alone would be enough to force official recognition.

1559: The Escalation of Huguenot Persecution in France

By 1559, however, a tension existed among the Huguenots between loyalty to the nurturer of their faith in Geneva and reticence to continue to accept their persecuted status when they were gaining size and influence. The Edict of Écouen in that year outlawed Protestantism in France, and many desired a forceful response. Calvin's body trembled in conjunction with the Huguenots' discomfiture: in a February letter to Huguenot prisoners in Paris, he wrote, "When I compare the slight suffering under which I pine... with the afflictions which oppress you;... I have occasion... to be moved to the deepest compassion and to groan for the temptations with which you may be assailed" (1998d:21).

In May, the first national synod of the French Reformed Church met in Paris. From Geneva, Calvin continued to urge restraint. The synod adopted a Confession of belief, written by Antoine de la Roche Chandieu (Walker 1985:516) but strongly manipulated by Calvin, which declared of the king, "We hold that his laws and statutes must be obeyed, that we must pay tribute and tax and all other duty and bear the yoke of subjection with frank willingness, even though the ruler be unfaithful" (Allen 1928:304). The synod did, however, send messengers to the German imperial diet at Frankfort to try to win the backing of the Lutheran princes. At the time, the princes were in discussion with King Henry to form an alliance against Emperor Charles V, who had aspirations for an empire that would subsume all the countries of Europe. Calvin hoped that if Henry wanted the Germans' help sincerely enough, they, in turn, might insist on toleration for all French Protestants as a treaty stipulation. Alas, the Huguenot confession never reached Frankfort, for its bearers were denied access by Protestant/Catholic fighting in Germany.

While stalling for time, hoping that something advantageous for the Huguenots might nonetheless come out of Frankfort independently, Calvin in his letters to the French faithful continued to hail prayer as the only weapon against continued royal atrocities. The synod had formally accepted Calvin's advice on non-resistance, but Calvin still needed to brace his followers for the worst. In June 1559, he wrote:

Now when you are called to this trial all that remains for you to do is to prepare yourselves for the confession of faith which God requires, as a sacrifice which is well-pleasing to him, however much the world despise and scoff at our simplicity. And if it is necessary that you should

be sacrificed in order to seal and ratify your testimony, he thus wills you to take courage to surmount all the temptations which might turn you aside from making it. For it is but reasonable that we [note again the first person identification] should suffer ourselves to be governed by the hand of so good a Father, though it may seem to us heavy and unfeeling (1998d:56).

The advice was timely: after Francis II succeeded Henry in July 1559, the number of Huguenot executions in the following months was so large that Theodore Beza would later invoke the words of Jesus in Matthew 24 that no one would have survived had not God “shortened the days” (Beza 1980:218). Yet, Calvin’s advice remained unwavering:

But since it is our [first person] duty to suffer, we ought humbly to submit; as it is the will of God that his church be subjected to such conditions that even as the plough passes over the field, so should the ungodly have leave to pass their sword over us all from the least to the greatest. According then to what is said in the psalm [?], *we should prepare our backs for stripes*. If that condition is hard and painful, let us be satisfied that our heavenly Father, in exposing us to death, turns it to our eternal welfare (1980:222).

Harro Höpfl, who has translated the section on political theory in Calvin’s *Institutes*, is almost incredulous in his evaluation: “Despite all these goings-on, about which Calvin was uniquely well informed, he was so far from addressing himself to the general question of the right of resistance, or even adding to what he had said already, that the occasion did not warrant even a new treatise” (1982:210). Menna Prestwich also says that Calvin may have given cohesion to the Huguenot churches in France, but “totally ineffectively as far as the victims of persecution were concerned” (1985:84). However, these two scholars appear to have assumptions that Calvin did not have, implying that he neglected a *responsibility* to match might with might to spare lives. Calvin wanted to spare lives, but his biblical hermeneutics dictated the limits within which he could attempt to do so.

In August 1559, Calvin released the fifth edition of the *Institutes* (the third and fourth editions having appeared in 1543 and 1550), and an intriguing addition appeared. Here he suggested that if magistrates commanded anything of their subjects contrary to the commands of God, the biblical injunction, “We ought to obey God rather than men,” comes into play. Inter-

preting Daniel 6:22, where Daniel denies disrespect to the Persian king for praying to the God of Israel against royal edict, Calvin explained, “For the king had exceeded his limits, and had not only been a wrong-doer against men, but, in lifting up his horns against God, had himself abrogated his power.” Furthermore, Calvin points out the censure of the prophet Hosea upon Israel for complying with the decrees of ungodly kings (Hos 5:11–3) (1960:1520).

Did Calvin hereby crack open a door of possibility for revolution? The answer remained a negative one; although Calvin applauded Daniel’s resolve, he did not suggest that Daniel should have struggled to avoid being thrown into the den of lions (Allen 1928:57). Various authors have attempted to trace the addition of 1559 to the influence of Theodore Beza (Kingdon 1958:226), Martin Bucer (Gray 1981:26), or John Knox (Allen 1928:58)—each of whom developed theories of justifiable revolution—but if Calvin owed new consideration of the limits of secular authority to one of them, he did not agree that force should be used to combat tyranny. Ever consistent, Calvin’s theory of resistance remained nonviolent. But in 1560, it would become apparent that the two main Calvinist houses of nobility—the Bourbons and the Colignys—had developed their own opinions on the matter.

1560: Calvin’s Authority Weakens

The addition to the 1559 edition of the *Institutes* was ambiguous enough to be interpreted by some in ways Calvin almost assuredly did not intend (Höpfl 1991:84). Frankly, it was as unlikely for Calvin to endorse revolution outright as for the French monarch suddenly to become a Huguenot. The impossibility of the latter was all the more confirmed by the strong Catholic loyalties of Francis’s uncles in the powerful Guise family. “This family was ardently convinced that the security of France rested on the maintenance of the Catholic faith” (Bainton 1985:165). Some of its more important representatives were Duke Francis, head of the French military; his brother the Cardinal of Lorraine, finance minister; and Mary, their niece, who was Queen of France and also Mary, Queen of Scots. Huguenot pamphlets responded to the Guise influence over the monarch with increasing venom, eventually targeting the Guises themselves as the real source of tyranny in France. As the argument ran, since the Guises had manipulated the crown, they were *de facto* illegitimate claimants to royal authority. As such, they could rightfully be removed by force (Allen 1928:304–5).

Once this opinion was voiced, it was not long from being enacted. In March 1560, an attempt was made to overthrow the Guise family and kidnap King Francis in the town of Amboise. Louis, the prince of Condé of the Bourbon family, is often recognized as the instigator of the Conspiracy of Amboise, although it is uncertain whether his awareness of the plot carried over to actual participation (Gray 1981:74–5). In any event, the attempted coup failed, and over a thousand Huguenots from the countryside surrounding Amboise were hanged, drowned, and otherwise executed in retaliation (Rothrock 1979:78). The event could not have been more embarrassing for Calvin, who was charged with inciting the incident and who realized that he could no longer be assured that his words against kingly tyranny would be interpreted in non-violent terms.

In October 1560, Calvin explained to Simon Sulzer, the Lutheran pastor who succeeded Oswald Myconius in Basle, that this was why he must be careful about writing at all about France in the future: “I am not sorry now to abstain from all writing which is not wrung from me by necessity, because I see that my letters are immediately made public. For a short time ago, when I had written to a friend who lives in your city, respecting the disturbances in France, I was surprised to learn that part of my letter had been quoted in the privy council of the king” (1998d:140). In a letter to Heinrich Bullinger on May 11, 1560, Calvin claimed actually to have discouraged the conspirators, being aware of their plans eight months before their implementation (1998d:113). He told much the same story to Coligny a year later in April 1561, explaining that if he would have encouraged commoners to join in the conspiracy, the carnage would have been far worse still (1998d:185).

In other words, Calvin believed that pacifism would spare more lives than would revolution. Theodore Beza, in his “Life of Calvin,” confirms Calvin’s alibi (Beza 1998:55), although he does not mention his own involvement in the plot, having gone so far as to send to Paris, “in the baggage of a young Calvinist noble minister, a copy of a pamphlet which was to be distributed as justification for the Conspiracy after its success” (Kingdon 1958:224).

When Francis II died in 1560, his son Charles IX became king. As a minor, Charles required his mother Catherine de Medici to serve as regent. After the Conspiracy of Amboise, Catherine provided for the Edict of Romorantin, signed at Poissy, which called for an armistice. Neither side of the religious conflict was impressed. The Guises were too incensed and too power-conscious to be satisfied with the peace, and among the Huguenots,

the martyrs of Amboise had become great heroes to be avenged. Huguenot propagandist Agrippa de Aubigné recalled when his father showed him the displayed heads of those killed following the conspiracy and instructed him “to avenge these deaths or be for ever cursed” (d’Aubigné 1985:88). This meant that Calvin’s pacifism would not hold for much longer.

While the bishops were meeting at Poissy, Calvin was busy working on his commentary on Daniel, dedicating it to the churches of France. It was in commenting on Daniel 6:22 in the *Institutes* that Calvin had spoken of Daniel’s rightful—though peaceful—resistance to the king’s prohibition of prayer. Would Calvin have anything new to prescribe in his commentary? Certainly, his language was stronger toward ungodly kings: “For earthly princes lay aside all their power when they rise up against God, and are unworthy of being reckoned in the number of mankind. We ought rather utterly to defy [them] than to obey them whenever they are so restive and wish to spoil God of his rights, and, as it were, to seize upon his throne and draw him down from heaven” (1993a:382). But this boisterous wind wrecked no palaces. As in the *Institutes*, Calvin commended Daniel for his *passive* resistance; he “was not remarkably anxious concerning his life, . . . even if he had to die a hundred times” (1998a:385).

Still, on October 1, 1560, in a letter to Sulzer, Calvin indicated that not only had he heard the cries of the oppressed in France, but that he supported one of their more subversive opinions: “The government of the Guises is not supportable, and many cannot any longer bear to see religion oppressed with so much and such violent barbarity” (1998d:140). In a short time, Calvin would receive an invitation to clarify his intentions—from the king himself.

1561: Huguenot Retaliation

By 1561, the Huguenot churches were beginning to amass troops on a wide scale, and at the time, there were approximately 1,785 consistories in France to contribute to the army (Prestwich 1985:85). But as matters were moving to a head, Charles IX called Calvin’s bluff. In January 1561, he accused Calvin of sending ministers into France precisely to instigate insurrection. Calvin responded quickly; on January 28, he informed Charles that he had always striven to be helpful to the three previous kings and had no less dutiful intentions at the present. He flatly denied “stirring up disturbances and seditions” (1998d:178). In fact, he denied—quite unbelievably—ever sending anyone to preach in France at all! Can what Calvin

meant be that he never sent anyone into France with the intention of stirring insurrection? His actual wording did not indicate as much: “We protest in verity before God that we have never attempted to send persons into your kingdom as your majesty has been told; . . . so that it will be found that no one, with our knowledge and permission, has ever gone from here to preach except a single individual who was asked of us for the city of London” (1998d:177).

There is no evidence that this one London missionary had Calvin’s permission to preach sedition, so Calvin was here speaking of preaching simply for the purpose of evangelism—which he denied supporting in France. Calvin claimed to know other ministers who trained such missionaries but denied being one himself. Yet, that ministry students came to Calvin precisely to be trained to return to France is well documented (Rothrock 1979:61; Gray 1981:70). Why would Calvin lie, as the evidence suggests that he did? One can only speculate, but the most likely answer would be that he did what he thought was most expedient for the survival of the Huguenots. What if Calvin would have admitted training missionaries for France, while adding that he did not want to foment rebellion but encouraged the missionaries to be loyalists? It is likely that even this qualified admission of religious insurgency would have negated in the king’s mind any pleas of fealty, for to Charles, political loyalty necessitated religious conformity. The pastor of Geneva likely did what he thought necessary to protect the lives of those who would have been imperilled had he revealed their identities and/or locations. A parallel example would be the “lie” told to Nazi soldiers by Baptist missionary Corrie ten Boom that she was not sheltering Jews, when in fact, she had made a bunker to protect them beneath her floor.

Despite Calvin’s protectiveness, he could not stop Huguenot forces from mobilization; in October 1561, they seized Montauban and a number of smaller towns around Toulouse. “Once established in any town,” says H. G. Koenigsberger, “they acted with great ruthlessness to carry out their aims and maintain themselves in power. They plundered churches and committed them to their preachers; they sacked monasteries, chased away the monks [as at Languedoc and Guienne], and forcibly married off the nuns” (1955:339). The Huguenots reasoned that they *were* loyalists since the Guise family had taken the crown captive. The Huguenots’ plundering may have been humane compared to the persecutions they had received, but their seizure of churches and property was certainly proof that their

ambition was greater than simply securing Charles's autonomous authority.

1562–1564: Calvin's Deterioration

In 1562, there were nearly two million Huguenots in France, about twenty percent of the national population (Prestwich 1985:73; McGrath 1993:191–2). As much as one-third (McGrath 1993:191) to one-half (Prestwich 1985:73) of the French nobility had become Calvinist, however, and territories under the influence of these nobles sometimes became aggressively Protestant. In what became known as the Edict of January, Catherine de Medici again sought to maintain the peace by granting freedom of worship to the Huguenots within certain recognized territories. The Guise family was of course enraged, and the Duke of Guise swiftly led an armed detail into a Huguenot church in Vassy and killed sixty-three worshipers out of six or seven hundred (Bainton 1985:169). The Duke “openly glorified” in the massacre (Beveridge 1998a:11), while Coligny organized a Huguenot response. Calvin encouraged French churches to contribute money to Coligny's efforts (after all, Coligny *was* a lower magistrate next-of-kin to the royal line) (Beveridge 1998b:506).

Ralph C. Hancock says that after Vassy, Calvin “went so far as to authorize the taking up of arms by Protestants and even the use of foreign soldiers, but only on the grounds that they were fighting not against the king but against usurpers (the Guises)” (Hancock 1989:116). However, Hancock does not provide primary documentation for this assertion, and if Calvin did say this, I have been unable to locate where. What *is* certain is that the Edict of January was effective only for a few months. Civil war had fully erupted. At the same time, so had a series of illnesses erupted upon John Calvin, preventing him from guiding the Huguenot cause any further.

From 1562–1564, Calvin developed enough bodily ailments to tax the diagnostic skills of any modern physician. The Englishman Edmond Grindal wrote Calvin in 1563, “It is... with the deepest sorrow we have learned the deplorable state of your health. Most assuredly it is the excess of your labors that has occasioned this illness” (Grindal 1998:466). In one letter to his doctors in February 1564, Calvin documented arthritis, kidney stones, cholic, ulcerous hemorrhoids, pain in the knees and calves, gout, and intestinal parasites (1980:242–3). Concurrently, his willingness or ability to talk about international matters reciprocally waned. Writing ten years after Calvin's death, Beza recalled in 1574 how, after the slaughter

of Vassy, "it is impossible to describe the many heavy cares which weighed upon Calvin; his infirmities also increasing so much, that it might then have been seen he was advancing with rapid step to a better life" (1998:57). Beza suggested that a good deal of Calvin's suffering arose from experiencing sympathetically the tribulation of his spiritual children, the Huguenots. Perhaps this was already operative in December 1562, when but a few sentences after ruing that there was no "free exercise of religion in France," Calvin told Bullinger that the pain in his feet was so great that he had to be carried to church (1998d:294).

Despite scholarly criticisms of his direction of the French Protestant movement, Calvin understood the Huguenot plight and how many lives were at stake. He himself had been a French refugee, and his worries for his countrymen apparently hastened his arrival at the death-in-suffering of the faithful to which he had exhorted so many others. The outnumbered Huguenots conceded to defeat in the Peace of Amboise in 1563, but the concession was temporary. The French Wars of Religion would continue on their bloody course, punctuated by the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of Huguenots in August 1572.

Calvin died on May 27, 1564, two months shy of reaching age 55. He was largely silent on matters in France during the last two years of his life. A letter of May 25, 1563, to a Monsieur de Soubise helps to explain: "Both your letters found me in so bad a state of health that it was impossible for me to answer them sooner, and even at present I know not if I shall be able to do it, inasmuch as the pains, or rather the tortures, of a desperate colic do not give me a moment's respite. Wherefore, I pray you to excuse my brevity, for my bodily sufferings have in a manner stultified my mind" (1998d:326). Calvin then went on to advise Monsieur de Soubise that though he should not throw himself "into the jaws of the wolf," he did not have the authority to act in direct opposition to the king of France.

CONCLUSION

By 1567, Huguenot claims to respect the king while denouncing his advisors the Guises could no longer be sustained. In 1568, the Protestant magistrates of La Rochelle decreed that kings who act in opposition to God are not true kings (Allen 1928:306). Even so, in 1572, Catherine de Medici arranged a marriage between her daughter Margaret and Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot. But the Guises corroborated Huguenot suspicions against

them, using the opportunity to attempt an assassination of Coligny. On August 23, Catherine, apparently realizing that co-existence between the two factions would not be won through peace, attempted to win stability through extermination, killing “at least three thousand in Paris and several times that number in the whole of France” (Walker 1985:520). But the cause was effectively over. Calvinism had failed to become the dominant cultural force in France during Calvin’s lifetime. Despite the Edict of Nantes, which until 1685 granted free exercise of Huguenot religion, it never would.

If Calvin’s goals for France were primarily the removal of anti-Protestant forces from power, then he did not achieve his intentions. Some historians have criticized Calvin for being so blinded by the relative peacefulness enjoyed in republican Geneva that he failed to understand that more drastic measures would be necessary for the Reformation to take hold in France. But the larger truth is that Calvin espoused a theory of nonviolent resistance to oppressive kings years before he would need to think of applying that theory to his native country. Calvin *did* understand the gravity of events in France. He tried to deal with them in the only ways he thought to be biblical. These methods were ultimately not effective, but Calvin’s firm belief in divine reward for faithful martyrs would not allow him to think of those martyrs as anything but victors in their struggle. In distinction from some contemporary Christian arguments for pacifism which appeal primarily to the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5) as an ethical guide for the present, Calvin could advocate nonviolence because of his belief in eschatological vindication. But, one wonders, in the atomic age, what would be the price for failing to resist evil? Dietrich Bonhoeffer agreed with Calvin in principle: he felt his participation in a plot to assassinate Hitler was a sin, yet he thought it a venial one when compared to allowing the Nazi dictator to conquer all of Europe.

Calvin never espoused a “natural right” to resist unjust magistrates. Insofar as such a teaching, based upon the idea that an official can forfeit the right of allegiance, became part of Huguenot political theory (as it did two centuries later of the American Revolution), it did so through conscientious distinction from Calvin. Indeed, Quentin Skinner, in his *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, points to the influence of Lutheran and even Catholic theories of resistance on later Huguenot developments on the matter (1989:8–9). One at least can see the possibility of resistance embedded in Luther’s thought, for though Luther said that Christians should not

defend themselves with force, they may do so to show love for their neighbors.

This essay contends that as Calvin shut out the possibility of force in France, he shut up within himself the forces of sorrow and anxiety over the Huguenot predicament that, having no other outlet, manifested themselves upon his body. It was a sympathetic expression not all that different from the medieval stigmata reported to have come upon those who so identified themselves with the sufferings of Christ, such as St. Francis. John Calvin lived and died a Frenchman and one can only imagine the "heavy cares" he had for his brothers and sisters that were impossible for Beza to describe. With a heavy heart did he receive the news of so much suffering, and because of that, in a sense, he was a Huguenot martyr, too. But did he have the psychological makeup that would produce in him a martyr *complex*? If so, did Christ also not bid his followers to come and die? One thing is certain: when Huguenotism became combative—rightly or wrongly, legitimately or illegitimately—it became a different movement from the vision of the man who first gave it coherence.

REFERENCES

- Allen, J. W.
1928 *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: The Dial Press.
- Bainton, Roland H.
1985 *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*. Boston: Beacon.
- Barton, F. Whitfield
1989 *Calvin and the Duchess*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox.
- Beveridge, Henry
1998a "Translator's Preface." In *Selected Works of John Calvin; Tracts and Letters: Volume 1; Tracts, Part 2*. Albany, Oregon: AGES Software.
1998b Footnote 202. In *Selected Works of John Calvin; Tracts and*

Letters: Volume 7; Letters, Part 4. Albany, Oregon: AGES Software.

Beza, Theodore

- 1980 Footnote 1. In *Letters of John Calvin*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth.
- 1998 "The Life of Calvin, Carefully Written by Theodore Beza, Minister of the Church of Geneva." In *Selected Works of John Calvin; Tracts and Letters: Volume 1; Tracts, Part 1*. Edited by Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet. Albany, Oregon: AGES Software.

Calvin, John

- 1960 *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Vols. 1 and 2. Edited by John T. McNeill. Trans. Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster.
- 1980 *Letters of John Calvin*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth.
- 1986 *Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1536 Edition*. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- 1991 "On Civil Government" (*Institutio Christianae Religionis* IV.20). In *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority*, edited by Harro Höpfl, 47–86. Cambridge: Cambridge.
- 1993a *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*. Vols. 1 and 2. Translated by Thomas Myers. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- 1993b *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*. Translated by John Owen. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- 1998a *Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia*. Albany, Oregon: AGES Software.
- 1998b *Selected Works of John Calvin; Tracts and Letters: Volume 5; Letters, Part 2 (1545–1553)*. Edited by Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet. Translated by David Constable. Albany, Oregon: AGES Software.
- 1998c *Selected Works of John Calvin; Tracts and Letters: Volume 6; Letters, Part 3 (1554–1558)*. Edited by Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet. Albany, Oregon: AGES Software.
- 1998d *Selected Works of John Calvin; Tracts and Letters: Volume 7; Letters, Part 4 (1559–1564)*. Edited by Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet. Translated by David Constable. Albany, Oregon: AGES Software.

Courthial, Pierre

- 1982 "The Golden Age of Calvinism in France: 1533–1633." *John Calvin: His Influence in the Western World*. Edited by W.

Stanford Reid. Grand Rapids: Academie/Zondervan.

Danner, Dan G.

1999 *Pilgrimage to Puritanism: History and Theology of the Marian Exiles at Geneva, 1555–1560*. New York: Peter Lang.

d'Aubigné, Agrippa

1985 "Sa vie à ses enfants," *Œuvres*, 385–386. In "Calvinism in France, 1559–1629." *International Calvinism 1541–1715*, by Menna Prestwich. Oxford: Clarendon.

Gray, Janet Glenn

1981 *The French Huguenots: Anatomy of Courage*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

Grindal, Edmond

1998 Letter mentioned in Footnote 73. In *Selected Works of John Calvin; Tracts and Letters: Volume 7; Letters, Part 4*. Edited by Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet. Trans. David Constable. Albany, Oregon: AGES Software.

Hancock, Ralph C.

1989 *Calvin and the Foundations of Modern Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell.

Höpfl, Harro

1982 *The Christian Polity of John Calvin*. Cambridge: Cambridge.
1991 *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority*. Cambridge: Cambridge.

Hubmaier, Balthasar

1991 "On the Sword." *The Radical Reformation*. Ed. Michael A. Baylor. Cambridge: Cambridge.

Jones, Serene

1995 *Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.

Kingdon, Robert M.

1956 *Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France, 1555–1563*. Geneva: Librairie E. Droz.
1958 "The Political Resistance of the Calvinists in France and the Low Countries." *Church History* 27/3 (September):220–233.

- Koenigsberger, H. G.
1955 "The Organization of Revolutionary Parties in France and the Netherlands During the Sixteenth Century." *The Journal of Modern History* 27/4 (December):335–351.
- Luther, Martin
1991 "On Secular Authority: How Far Does the Obedience Owed to It Extend?" *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority*, edited by Harro Höpfl. Cambridge: Cambridge.
- McGrath, Alister E.
1993 *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- McNeill, John T.
1949 "The Democratic Element in Calvin's Thought." *Church History* 18/3 (September):207–40.
- Prestwich, Menna
1985 "Calvinism in France, 1559–1629." In *International Calvinism 1541–1715*, ed. Menna Prestwich. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Rothrock, G. A.
1979 *The Huguenots: A Biography of a Minority*. Chicago: Nelson Hall.
- Skinner, Quentin
1989 *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, II.219–21,227,233,240,319–21. In *Calvin and the Foundation of Modern Politics*, by Ralph C. Hancock. Ithaca: Cornell.
- Tommaseo, M.
1981 *Relations des ambassadeurs vénitiens*, 1:415. In *The French Huguenots: Anatomy of Courage*, by Janet Glenn Gray. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Walker, Williston, et al.
1985 *A History of the Christian Church*. New York: Scribner's.

“What Ought We To Do?”

Normativity in Barth’s Ethics of Creation

SCOTT PAETH

INTRODUCTION

THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO ENTER THE *CHURCH Dogmatics* never to be heard from again. Its labyrinthine structure makes any examination of its contents an amazingly complex task. Thus, any examination of Barth’s thought must always focus in on one small part of the whole or else risk becoming hopelessly lost in the seemingly endless corners around which one might decide to peer. That being the case, I make no pretensions in this article to offer an exhaustive account of Barth’s ethical thought. My objective is to explore one particular issue raised by his approach to the problem of theological ethics. There have been several recent books which ably explore aspects of Barth’s moral theology. My intention in this paper is to open discussion on an issue touched upon but lightly in these other treatments—namely the problem of “normativity” in theological ethics.¹

What do I mean here by “normativity”? In brief, normativity is the name given to those aspects of ethical thought which guide and judge the actions of moral agents. It is, in other words, the description of those *norms* according to which moral agents *act*. Thus, for example, the chief norm according to which a utilitarian acts is related to the principle that the greatest good should be done for the greatest number. Or again, a Kantian would work according to the norms set out in the Categorical Imperative. Whatever it is

¹This article was originally written for a course in the theology of Karl Barth at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ. My thanks to Professor Daniel Migliore for his comments and instruction

according to which the moral agent judges his or her own actions as being right or wrong, good or bad, falls under the heading of normativity.

At first glance, Barth's ethics seems to have a very simple and straightforward norm. He insists that all theological ethics has to do with the "command of God" (Barth II/2:516). However, by the command of God, Barth does not mean to imply a deontological or rule-based system of ethics. Rather, for Barth, as I will proceed to explain, the command of God is something which is given to the agent by God in the particular situation in which the agent finds him or herself. But the question arises of how such a normative principle can actually be either reliable or efficacious for moral decision-making.

This is especially interesting in terms of his contrast between the scriptural norm and what he calls "exceptional cases" of the command of God. In light of the method he employs, on what grounds is he able to argue that these exceptional cases are also constitutive of the command of God? Looking at his discussion of "freedom for life" in *Church Dogmatics* III/4, section 55, we will critically explore how he applies his method in those situations that call for ethical decisions "at the edge of life." But let us turn first to the question of Barth's ethical method.

BARTH'S ETHICAL METHODOLOGY

Barth makes a distinction in the *Church Dogmatics* between "general" and "special" ethics. His discussion of the general basis of ethics is found in the second half of II/2 in the doctrine of God, while the discussion of the special basis of ethics is reserved for III/4, under the doctrine of Creation.

We turn first to his discussion of ethics in general, in which he provides a useful summary of his method, using the question: "what ought we to do?" as the organizing principle. What ought we to do, he wonders, in light of the gracious action of God toward us in Jesus Christ. But before we turn to consider the way in which he utilizes this question, let us first consider a few preliminary remarks about what ethics is not according to Barth.

What Ethics is Not

Nigel Biggar points out that Barth's frequent attacks on "ethics" in the *Church Dogmatics* is not an attack on ethics as such, but rather an attack on

a specific way of doing ethics, which had been predominant in the modern period. That is, an ethic which is based solely on the will of the autonomous individual: “[Barth] uses ‘ethics’ to refer to the subjective idealist conception of the making of moral judgments as an autarkic process; that is, as a process in which the human subject is absolutely self-determinative” (Biggar 1993:7–8).

Such an ethics, as Barth sees the case, is based on a rebellion against God and an assertion of the individual will against the will of God. Thus, his attack on “ethics” is to be construed not as an attack on ethics generally. Rather, ethics can never be seen as a free-standing subject for general reflection, but instead is firmly rooted in the task of dogmatics. Thus, as he discusses this in relation to the doctrine of God, Barth writes: “The doctrine of God must be expressly defined and developed and interpreted as that which it also is at every point, that is to say, *ethics*” (II/2:513). Specifically in II/2, Barth derives his discussion of ethics from his previous discussion of the election of humanity in Jesus Christ as God’s covenant partner.

But if this is so, then any ethics which seeks to set itself up on some other basis than the electing grace of God in Jesus Christ must be rejected. Otherwise humanity puts itself in the position of God by trying to determine for itself what constitutes the right and the good under God: “[M]an is not content simply to *be* the answer to this question by the grace of God. He wants to be like God. He wants to know of himself (as God does) what is good and evil. He therefore wants to give this answer himself and of himself” (517). Barth asserts that the proper attitude of humanity is not that of seeking to *know* the good as something independent of God, but rather of trusting in God’s goodness and acting responsibly in light of God’s electing grace.

This precludes, Barth argues, not only the apologetic approach to ethics of someone like Schleiermacher and the Roman Catholic “two story” approach to ethics, but also any philosophical approach which would seek to argue that Christianity and philosophical ethics speak different languages and thus philosophy has nothing to learn from the Christian approach. Rather, he argues that Christianity needs to assert itself as the true source of all legitimate ethical reflection (520–535). Any philosophical ethics which attempts to set itself against its theological basis in the election of God is bound to fail: “In so far as a non-theological ethics has for its content a humanity which is grounded in itself and discovers and proclaims itself, theo-

logical ethics will have to deny the character of this humanity as humanity and consequently the character of this ethics as ethics" (541).

Additionally, Barth rejects those ethical systems which seek to establish the command of God as anything which can be captured and contemplated apart from the sovereign grace of God. Even if one agrees with Barth that all ethics arise from the command of God, Barth would not allow that to imply that the command of God is something which is now free-standing and exists apart from God's active involvement in the life of God's people. Thus, one is not permitted to assert such an ethic as either a deontological set of rules which stand above us, or as a teleological endpoint which we may clearly see and toward which we may strive.

In contrast to the various options which Barth considers and rejects, Barth's own approach to ethics is rooted in the fact of God's present acting and commanding: "The first thing that theological ethics has to show, and to develop as a basic and all-comprehensive truth, is the fact and extent that the command of God is an event" (II/2:548). This is the controversial thesis which makes Barth's ethical thinking so elusive. As God is the free God of grace, God is not limited by God's past commands, but is always and presently commanding. Furthermore, on the side of humanity: "Concrete human action thus proceeds under a divine order which persists in all the differentiations of individual cases. It too, takes place in a connexion which is sure though it can seldom if ever be demonstrated" (III/4:17).

But in light of this ethical actualism, how is one to determine what actions ought to be taken in any particular situation? Or rather, by what method do we go about determining what is the command of God, whether what we have is truly the divine command, or how others may or may not be acting according to the divine command? What are the criteria based upon which we make those determinations? In order to clarify this, let us now turn to discuss Barth's own method before we turn to see how he applies this method.

What ought we to do?

One point which we need to make explicit at the outset, if only briefly, is Barth's understanding of the human agent as one who is *responsible* in light of the grace of God. He writes: "We live in responsibility, which means that our being and willing what we do and what we do not do, is a continuous

answer to the Word of God spoken to us as a command" (II/2:641). Indeed, it is the idea of responsibility which makes Christian ethics as such distinctive: "The idea of responsibility, rightly understood, is known only to Christian ethics. This alone teaches a true and proper confrontation of man" (II/2:642). Why is this?

In light of the free and sovereign grace of God, which commands us in every moment, the central question as Barth sees it is whether or not we will respond faithfully to that command. A predicate of this assertion, which we will explore in more detail later, is that there is no question on our part of *ignorance* of the divine command. Rather, we are without excuse. Barth explicitly rejects an appeal to ambiguity as to the command of God, writing:

The objection that the divine will is not known to us, or not sufficiently known, in its definiteness is not only futile but cunning and deceitful because it makes a virtue or an excuse out of our need, because it raises our unwillingness to hear carefully what is precisely spoken to us as those to whom God is present and near, to the status of a necessity on the basis of which we can withdraw into the supposed neutrality of an arbitrary questioning as to the good, so that we are acquitted in advance if in our arbitrary choice between the many possibilities open to us we may not coincide with the will of God. Our very retirement into this neutral position is in itself the signal of a perverse decision, an act of disobedience and unbelief (II/2:670).

Ethical reflection, then, cannot proceed as though its task were to discern through the fog of human finitude that which it is God wills. Rather, it is solely a question of obedience to the command which we have heard.

But this is not to imply that the possibility of hearing the divine command does not itself require something of us. For if we are to be responsible in our action, we must engage in prayerful ethical reflection. This reflection is centered on the question of "what ought we to do?" Barth organizes his discussion of moral reflection around this question.

He begins by considering the question of *what* we ought to do. The importance of the *what* is that it indicates that we are asking the question in the first place of God. Thus we are admitting our ignorance in humility and recognizing our need of the divine command. We thus recognize that "our previous answers cannot consist of more than hypothesis and opinion. They cannot be a knowledge of the will and command of God" (II/2:646). In light

of this we must always come to God anew, not presuming to know in advance what God will command of us:

When we honestly ask: *What* ought we to do?, we approach God as those who are ignorant in and with all they already know, and those who are ignorant in and with all that they already know, and stand in dire need of divine instruction and conversion. We are then ready, with a view to our next decision, to bracket and hold in reserve all that we think we know concerning the rightness and goodness of our past and present decisions, all the rules and axioms, however good, all the inner and outer laws and necessities under which we have hitherto placed ourselves and perhaps do so again. None of these has an unlimited claim to be valid again to-day as it was valid yesterday. None of them is identical with the divine command (II/2:646).

This comports with what Barth says later when he writes that “for God every encounter with every man at every historical moment is of sufficient individual importance for him on His side to encounter man in His command in a unique way, for which there is neither precedence nor recurrence” (III/4:16).

But in light of this, it is necessary to ask as well “what *ought* we to do?” Barth acknowledges the need for an imperative which directs our action in all ethical decisions. Yet this imperative, unlike Kant’s Categorical Imperative, is something which cannot find its location in our own selves, but must come from outside of us: “If there is an *ought*, it must not be the product of my own will, but touch from outside the whole area of what I can will of myself” (II/2:651). The issue is not whether we may prove or establish what the imperative is, but only whether we will or will not obey it. The question that we must ask ourselves when the emphasis is on this “ought” is not what it is that we believe will be in our own best interests, nor what we believe is in the best interests of our fellow humans or the world in general. Rather, the imperative must be rooted solely in the command of God.

But what is the source of this imperative? In light of his previous assertion that the command of God comes directly to us in our situation, what is the role of the scriptural commands, such as the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount? Barth’s approach to these questions is first to deny that scripture is generally in the business of handing out general moral principles. Rather, Barth considers the fact that one finds commands of God everywhere in scripture, and most of them are directed to-

ward individuals in individual situations—such as the command to Adam and Eve to “be fruitful and multiply,” or the command to Abraham to leave his country.

However, Barth does acknowledge that, at least in the cases of the Decalogue and Sermon on the Mount, we have general instructions to larger groups of people. But even so, Barth refuses to see these commands as imperatives in the sense of universal ethical norms. One cannot look backward to these commands and assert them as God’s will then, now, and forever. Rather, Barth sees them as “indicative.” They point to the state of redeemed humanity in the Kingdom of God rather than to the present situation of God’s commanding of fallen individuals in a fallen world. They are “summaries” rather than straightforward imperatives (II/2: 682). Speaking specifically of the Sermon on the Mount, he writes:

The Sermon on the Mount reckons with this powerful and fatal appearance by saying of those that weep that they *shall* be comforted, of the meek that they *shall* possess the earth, of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness that they *shall* be filled (Mt. 5: 4f.). That it is only an appearance, it attests by the fact that its overwhelming and decisive emphasis is not on the future but on the present. It says of those who are poor in spirit that theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven, and again of those who are persecuted for righteousness sake that theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven. Those who hear and believe the message, who do not see a future but a present transformation of the whole world situation, and therefore of that of man—the twilight of the gods completed, Satan falling as lightning from heaven—such begin to live on the basis of this change (II/2:688–9).

As Nigel Biggar puts it: “In Barth’s ethics the Bible’s primary contribution is in the form of narrative rather than ethical principles and rules” (Biggar 1993:105). This narrative tells us who the God is by whose grace we are saved and according to whose commands we are to act. As the quote above indicates, the commands represented in scripture assure us of God’s victory over death and evil and God’s present purposes of God’s creation.

Does this mean that we can take nothing from the scriptures to aid us in our moral reflection? No. Rather, Barth assures us that the ethical statements in scripture reveal something fundamentally true about *God*, in which we can trust in all our reflections. The directions given to us in scripture “do indicate the ‘prominent lines’ along which the commanding

of Jesus always moved *and always moves* in relation to individuals” (Biggar 1993:116).

In light of this, we must still ask the question again with a different emphasis, asking now “what ought *we* to do?” This emphasis captures the subjective and very personal aspect of moral reflection. As Barth points out, we cannot ask “what ought *one* to do?” in the abstract. The concreteness of all ethical decisions makes it imperative that we understand the question as related fundamentally to ourselves: “[T]he ethical question can be answered only as we make our own the necessary reflection of man on his confrontation by the divine command” (II/2:653).

Yet, even as we are addressed personally, we are addressed as persons *in relationship*. Thus, we cannot simply see the divine command as coming to us as isolated atoms. Rather, we exist as members of a covenant community which is rooted in God’s electing grace. Barth writes:

Even in the necessary testing of my conduct I cannot overlook or forget the fact that I am never alone, and never will be.... The one absolute thing which is the object of God’s command, and to which we are summoned when it is declared to us, is not something that I am and have alone, but only in the community and solidarity of many, perhaps all men. It is only as I detach myself as an individual that I can seriously ask: What ought I to do? But as I do so, I do not really detach myself. I return at once to the ranks from which I step out. For even as I step out in the moment of my decision, and even in the moment of my corresponding reflection, I still belong (II/2:655).

This gets to what John Webster refers to as the “moral space” in which Barth’s ethics operates (Webster 1995:216). Borrowing concepts from Charles Taylor, Webster understands moral space to be the realm or community in which the particularities of moral life are asserted as being real and genuine: “It is an account of what the good *is* rather than what it is chosen or desired to be” (Webster 1995:216). Barth’s understanding of the communal character of moral reflection, as something that takes place in light of the relationships we have with God primarily and also with our fellow human beings, constitutes what Webster refers to as a “moral ontology,” in which the reality of an ethics is accepted as a given of our life together (215).

But even in light of the moral space which we occupy and the community with which we engage in reflection, our work is not over, for if reflection does not flow into action, it is fruitless. Therefore, Barth offers one more

iteration on his question, this time asking “what ought we to *do*?” As Barth uses it, this emphasis makes explicit the fact that we are intimately involved with the moral choices we make: “In this respect it is important that ethical reflection is itself an ethical act, a moment of what we are and will and do and do not do as subjected to the divine command, or rather a special determination of each aspect” (II/2:658). Thus, by asking what it is we do in the context of this reflection, we situate ourselves with relation to the whole of our lives, actions, behaviors, etc. We are always being questioned as to our acting by God and judged in our doing according to whether we obey or disobey the concrete command of God given to us in our act of questioning as to the will of God.

Through the asking of this one question in light of the four-fold emphasis he puts on it, Barth attempts to provide a method by which we may come to act in obedience to the will of God. In doing so, we “testify that we ourselves are challenged by that supreme authority which makes all escape or neutrality quite impossible” (II/2:661). It is a question that we address, not to ourselves, as Barth emphasizes, but to God in expectation of God’s sovereign direction.

Spheres of the Divine Command

Another important aspect of Barth’s method is his reliance on what he calls “spheres” of God’s commanding. His discussion of this is intriguing precisely because he uses the term “spheres” to differentiate his approach to the ethics of creation from the approaches of Brunner and Bonhoeffer. Brunner prefers the traditional language of “Orders of Creation,” while Bonhoeffer prefers to speak of divine “mandates.” Barth considers both of these approaches but rejects them (although he is much more impressed by Bonhoeffer’s approach). In particular, he approves of Bonhoeffer’s emphasis on the vertical character of the imperatives, rather than the more horizontal approach implied in the doctrine of orders of creation: “Bonhoeffer’s ‘mandates’ are not laws somehow immanent in created reality and to be established at random by the moralist and proclaimed in a form which he himself discovers. On the contrary, they are ‘from above,’ like the divine command itself, and indeed with it, as the ‘form’ which is quite inseparable from it” (III/4:22).

Nevertheless, Barth prefers to speak of particular spheres in which God makes God’s commands. He points out that “[w]hen God and man meet as revealed in the Word of God, then definite spheres and relationships

may be seen in which this encounter takes place” (III/4:29). It is not a question of God commanding one set of things in one sphere and another in a different sphere. Rather, the one will of God commands human beings to do one thing, though in a diversity of ways: “The one will of God, without becoming disunited within itself, has different forms; and similarly His command, while it always commands man to do one thing, has different elements” (III/4:29).

These spheres and relationships are important particularly in light of the question we are putting to Barth about normativity. For these spheres demarcate the realm in which the question of God’s command needs to be asked: “The reality in which the ethical event takes place is its reality in the spheres and relationships which arise and are revealed in this way. It is clear that neither the command of God nor the obedience or disobedience of man takes place apart from these spheres and relationships, nor can they be abstracted from them” (III/4:29). Barth identifies three spheres, which correspond to the three ways in which God relates to the world – as creator to creature, reconciler to pardoned sinner, and redeemer to redeemed (III/4:29).

How then are these spheres different from the orders of creation which Barth rejects? Barth’s primary reservation seems to be that the theology of orders attempts to plot out too completely the map of God’s will, whereas Barth wants to make a much more modest proposal: “These might very well be called orders or ordinances. But then there would always be the possibility of misunderstanding them as laws, prescriptions and imperatives. They are the spheres in which God commands and man is obedient or disobedient, but not laws according to which God commands and man does right or wrong” (III/4:29–30). Another concern was the relationship of the arguments for orders of creation to the Nazi programme. Nigel Biggar quotes Barth thus: “‘All arguments based on Natural Law are Janus-headed. . . . They lead to—Munich’” (Biggar 1993:55).

However, Biggar makes an interesting point about the relationship between Barth’s “spheres” and the “orders” of other theologians. He writes that in the doctrine of creation, “although we do not find anything that answers to the name of ‘order of creation,’ we do find much that corresponds to its substance” (1993:56). Barth’s resistance to the terminology, argues Biggar, has more to do with the prejudices of his audience than to a problem with the terminology itself. Biggar thus concludes that “the concept of orders of creation is predominant throughout [the *Church Dogmatics*], albeit incog-

nito" (1993:58). This is an intriguing argument, which seems unlikely to convince most aficionados of Barth, but it nevertheless makes clear that there does exist in Barth's estimation some constant form of relationship between creator and creature, whether it is called orders of creation, mandates, spheres or what have you. This is of central concern for the issue of normativity, for it at least gives us something which we can point to and say "for Barth, this remains constant despite the diversity of God's commanding."

Let us take a moment to evaluate where we've been. The initial question with which we began was whether Barth could be said to have a method which allows of normative moral principles, based upon which we could exercise moral judgment. The answer, it seems, is now both Yes and No. On the one hand, we find that Barth sees God acting and commanding in certain constant ways—for instance, that the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount provide a reliable account of the "prominent lines" which the command of God takes in the world, based upon which, we may be able to evaluate ethical actions. We have also seen that Barth conceives of the divine command as coming to God's creatures in certain constant forms. Yet at the same time, Barth makes it clear that the command of God cannot be exhausted by the scriptural record, and that the command of God always comes to us anew in our reflection. He also makes it clear that the spheres through which God's command takes place "are not universal ethical truths, but only the general form of the one and supremely particular truth of the ethical event which is inaccessible as such to the casuistical grasp" (III/4:30).

Furthermore, Barth is insistent that the kind of questions which are most often put to Christian ethics are not the kind of questions Christian ethics should be in the business of answering: "To make decisions about the content of the divine command and good and evil in human action cannot be the task of ethics, nor can it be suggested to us by a knowledge of the spheres in which divine command and human action take place. More than the general form of the particular truth of the ethical event, more than the spheres in which this takes place, cannot be the content of this knowledge" (Ibid.).

Thus, although there are standards in Barth's method of moral reflection on the basis of which we may be said to base our judgments, Barth does not see judgment as a part of the ethical task. Rather, the only question is whether we will heed the command which God has given us and which we need only decide to obey or disobey. It is not a question of discernment but of discipline that is at the core of ethics for Barth, and thus he refuses to ac-

knowledge the argument that God's will is something that we may or may not be able to discern. Thus, we often must be forced back on our best judgment as limited creatures.

Let us now turn to see how Barth utilizes his method of moral reflection in a particular case, as we now turn to ethics and "Freedom for Life."

THE NORM AND THE EXCEPTIONAL CASE

Barth enumerates seven premises which he sees as essential to an ethics of life: first, that God addresses human beings as their Creator and Lord. Therefore, "man's creaturely existence as such is not his property; it is a loan" (III/4:327). Second, that human beings exist in a distinction between soul and body (328). Third, that God addresses human beings in their particularity, not abstractly (328). Fourth, human beings exist as creatures in time (329). Fifth, God is the source of human life: "As God addresses man, it is decided, and man is reassured, that his life possesses an origin" (329). Sixth, that humans are determined by God for freedom, and God is the Lord of that freedom (330). And seventh, that human beings are determined by God to be free in fellowship with one another, and thus humans cannot act as autonomous agents (331). These premises serve as the basis on which he argues in favor of or against particular ethical perspectives.

Given these premises, why could Barth not maintain that respect for life always entails its protection and preservation against those things which threaten it? Barth's chief objection to this point of view is that it asserts that God's will for human beings must at all times speak in favor of life's preservation, a statement which Barth does not see as legitimate:

Is it really true that the command of God in all cases and circumstances contains the imperative that man should will to live? Must not this imperative in some cases at least be formulated in what is from the literal standpoint a very paradoxical sense if it is really to be understood as the command of God? Understood in its most literal sense, it is hardly an unconditional and absolutely valid imperative which as such has necessarily to be included in every form of the divine command. Precisely as the command of God, does it not have a restricted validity, since the God who commands is not only the Lord of life but also the Lord of death? Is it really so un-

thinkable that, when his command summons man to freedom before Him and fellowship with his fellow-men, it might include a very different imperative, or this imperative in its most paradoxical formulation, to the effect that man should not will to live unconditionally, to spare his life, to preserve it from death, but that he should rather will to stake and surrender it, and perhaps be prepared to die? (III/4:334–5)

As life is a loan from God, it cannot be declared as an absolute value. Rather, it must be put at the service of God, and this may not only involve its preservation, but sometimes its sacrifice as well.

Turning to the issue of the command of God in the specific case of the protection of life, Barth considers several issues, including suicide, abortion, euthanasia, self-defense, the death penalty, and war. The assertion which serves as the basis of his arguments in this section is the following: “If the command of this protection is unconditional, the protection still has its inner norm in the will of God the creator who enjoins it on man, in the horizon which is set for man by the same God with ordination to eternal life. Thus the protection of life required of us is not unlimited nor absolute” (III/4:397–8). Barth’s concern is to leave life in the sphere of God’s free relationship to God’s creation. However, he emphasizes that “with this self-evident modification [i.e., that God as the creator is the Lord of life] it is commanded absolutely” (398).

However, if it is commanded absolutely in light of this modification, how are we to determine when we are required to sacrifice life in light of the command of God? Barth writes: “Its difficulty lies in the fact that it cannot be completely excluded, since we cannot deny the possibility that God as the Lord of life may further its protection even in the strange form of its conclusion and termination rather than its preservation and advancement” (III/4:398). Biggar comments on the problematic nature of Barth’s position on this point:

[Barth] thereby implicitly treats the Sixth Commandment as an absolute rule in the sense that it holds in all *appropriate* cases. Unfortunately, Barth obscures this logic by insisting that the command to protect life is unconditiona—that is, applies in *all* cases—but that “protection” has its “inner norm” in the will of God. In other, voluntarist words, God decides what protection means and involves; and although

it usually means what we assume it to mean, sometimes it means something quite extraordinary (even nonsensical) (Biggar 1993:119).

Thus, for instance, Barth allows for the possibility that abortion may be acceptable only in those cases where the mother's life (or health) is in danger. But Barth is careful to insist that if the decision is to be made in favor of abortion, "these will be situations in which all the arguments for preservation have been carefully considered and properly weighed, and yet abortion remains as *ultima ratio*. If all the possibilities of avoiding this have not been taken into account in this decision, then murder is done. Genuine exceptions will thus be rare" (III/4:421). This points to an aspect of Barth's moral theology that we will see repeated in other examples of the preservation of life – namely that when life must be taken in these "exceptional cases" it is not considered by Barth to be murder, and thus not sinful. As it is positively commanded of us by the sovereign grace of God it cannot be a sin, since sin, as Barth has defined it, is constituted only by disobedience to the divine command.

We see this operating in another example in the case of self-defense. Barth spends considerable space considering the arguments in favor of a nonviolent ethic on the basis of scripture, including the arguments advanced by Gandhi and Tolstoy. And in fact he agrees that, in light of the gospel the innate human desire toward the protection of our life and property is to be resisted: "As forcefully as it can, the command of God tells us that this instinct is wrong and not right. What is at stake in the sanctification of man by the command is the most radical purification of this instinct, its transformation from arbitrariness, and therefore its obedience" (III/4:433).

Nevertheless, he also allows that there may be the exceptional case in which, when called upon to defend our lives or property, "we can be just as useful and serviceable to [God] in the execution of such orders" (434). However, this is not to be understood as a blanket permission to execute all intruders or assailants. Rather, "it exists only for those who have fully heard the command which in the first instance points in a very different direction, and who have thus allowed themselves to be completely deprived of the 'right' of what is called self-defence" (435). Thus, "he alone may do so who is not only 'entitled' but actually ordered to do this because he has heard the command of respect for life as the command of the living God and cannot therefore give free rein to the wickedness of his neighbor" (436).

To take but one more example (there are several that we could adduce), let us now look to the question of war. Barth acknowledges that modern military technology and tactics have made war a problem for everyone, and not just for “the so-called military classes.... To-day everyone is a military person” (451). Barth rejects those arguments in favor of war which rest on national self-interest or general self-justification. These replies “constitute a flat betrayal of the Gospel” (455). Barth writes: “All affirmative answers to the question [of whether war is justifiable] are wrong if they do not start with the assumption that the inflexible negative of pacifism has almost infinite arguments in its favour and is almost overpoweringly strong” (III/4:455).

War is a question of what is or is not the appropriate function of the state. Barth insists that the state’s primary function is the preservation and promotion of life: “According to the Christian understanding, it is no part of the normal task of the state to wage war; its normal task is to fashion peace in such a way that life is served and war kept at bay” (458). Is there any circumstance under which Barth would allow for the possibility that the waging of war may come under the positive command of God? There is one— when it involves the self-preservation of a nation against outside aggression:

Indeed, it is only in answer to this particular question that there is a legitimate reason for war, namely, when a people or state has serious grounds for not being able to assume responsibility for the surrender of its independence, or to put it even more sharply, when it has to defend within its borders the independence which it has serious grounds for not surrendering. The sixth commandment is too urgent to permit the justification of war by Christian ethics on any other grounds (461).

Why is this the case? Barth answers that the state has “responsibility for the whole physical, intellectual and spiritual life of the people comprising it, and therefore their relationship to God” (462). The state cannot abrogate that responsibility and put its people, and in particular their relationship to God, at risk.

In addition, Barth leaves open the possibility that a state may also come to the aid of another nation with which it has a treaty. Barth’s conclusion therefore is that “at such a time Christian ethics cannot be absolutely pacifist” (462). He argues that “should the command of God require a nation to

defend itself in such an emergency, or in solidarity with another nation in such an emergency, then it not only may but must do so" (462).

In all of these cases, we see that Barth's initial position is that scripture enjoins us to protect life in every case. But, consistent with his position that the command of God cannot be captured and made into human property, he allows for the possibility that in certain cases the command of God may enjoin us to act in a way which would deprive someone of their life. If we sincerely come to God with the four-fold question "what ought we to do?" in our minds, we must leave open such possibilities, rather than preempt the sovereign will of God. Furthermore, as God relates to us in the sphere of Creator to creation, Barth insists that our lives are not an absolute, but a gift or loan from God, and therefore can be demanded of us by God at any time.

Even if we grant Barth his first point—that we must leave open the possibility that God in freedom may command us to deprive someone of their lives—can we grant his second point? In light of the material we've already discussed, his arguments about the gift of life as a loan do not seem to imply what he argues they do. Let us take his position in "Respect for Life" as given. The only conclusion that we can validly draw from this section is that we may not value *our own* lives above the command of God. As *our lives* are a gift or loan from God, we are obligated to sacrifice them under God's command if God so wills it. However, the fact that our lives are given to us as a loan implies nothing about how we ought to behave *vis-a-vis* the lives of others. There is nothing in Barth's arguments on the respect of life that would imply that we have the right to return to God that which God has loaned *someone else*. There is a difference between *giving* our lives to God, and *taking* a life under the command of God. God has not given *me* the life of another as a gift to do with as I will. I have only been given *my* life, and based upon Barth's arguments, that is the only life that I can offer to God. This is especially striking since Barth only deals with the issue of suicide as a form of the surrender of one's life in this section, while not dealing with such things as putting ourselves in danger for the sake of another. The question with which Barth contends in the sections under consideration has not to do with the disposal of *our lives*, but with how we may be commanded to dispose of the lives of *others*!

But I do not think we can even grant Barth his first point—that God's positive command may be such that we may be obligated by obedience to take the life of another. As I have pointed out, the implication embedded in Barth's arguments on this score is that in such circumstances the taking of life is not

sinful, but a righteous act in obedience to the divine command. Furthermore, since we cannot claim to be ignorant of the divine command, we cannot make an appeal to the ambiguity of the human situation to assert that we may not have a clear picture of *what* precisely the will of God might be. Thus, Barth neglects the tragic aspects of ethical decision-making.

There are three options that Barth allows for: Either, (1) We hear the command of God according to the norm of scripture and obey it; (2) We hear the command of God in one of these exceptional cases and obey it; or (3) We hear the command of God and *disobey* it. Of these three options, only the third is considered sinful by Barth. If the command of God requires that we take life, then this is not murder, but rather a justifiable act of homicide (III/4:400).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for whom Barth expressed so much admiration, probably came closer to an actual act of homicide than Barth ever did, and yet his own position on this issue made no such appeals to justification. Rather, he recognized the tragic and ambiguous character of those situations in which such a choice is necessary. He wrote:

If someone sets out to fight his battles in the world in his own absolute *freedom*, if he values the necessary deed more highly than the spotlessness of his own conscience and reputation, if he is prepared to sacrifice a fruitless principle to a fruitful compromise, or for that matter the fruitless wisdom of the *via media* to a fruitful radicalism, then let him beware lest precisely his supposed freedom may ultimately prove his undoing. He will easily consent to the bad, knowing full well that it is bad, in order to ward off what is worse, and in doing this he will no longer be able to see that precisely the worse which he is trying to avoid may still be the better. This is one of the underlying themes of tragedy (Bonhoeffer 1955:67).

Yet even in spite of the tragic possibilities inherent in this situation, Bonhoeffer prefers it to the other options available. Indeed, Bonhoeffer would go so far as to assert that what it means to be formed in the image of Christ is to be willing to take on guilt and sin for the sake of another:

If any man tries to escape guilt in responsibility he detaches himself from the ultimate reality of human existence, and what is more he cuts himself off from the redeeming mystery of Christ's bearing guilt without sin and he has no share in the divine justification which lies upon this event. He sets his own personal innocence above his responsibil-

ity for men, and he is blind to the more irredeemable guilt which he incurs precisely in this ; he is blind also to the fact that real innocence shows itself precisely in a man's entering into the fellowship of guilt for the sake of other men. Through Jesus Christ it becomes an essential part of responsible action that the man who is without sin loves selflessly and for that reason incurs guilt (1955:241).

Thus, for Bonhoeffer there are two options, not three. Either we obey the command of God and preserve life, or we disobey it and destroy life. But if we chose to incur the guilt implied by murder we should do it for the sake of our fellow human beings. We should be willing to trust in God's grace even in our disobedience, in precisely those situations where obedience is impossible.

The influence of Reinhold Niebuhr is evident in Bonhoeffer's position. Niebuhr made the distinction between the Christian ethic of love and a rational ethic of justice. While love is always oriented to the neighbor without concern for the self, an ethic of justice is based on a principle of reciprocity (cf. Niebuhr 1932:57). An ethic of love rooted in the ethical teaching of Jesus (which for Niebuhr provides the norm for Christian ethical reflection) can have no part in violence, but must rather be rooted in forgiveness:

Men are enjoined to "love their enemies," to "forgive, not seven times, but seventy times seven," to resist evil, to turn the other cheek, to go the second mile, to bless them that curse you and do good to them that hate you. In all these injunctions both resistance and resentment are forbidden. The self is not to assert its interests against those who encroach upon it, and not to resent the injustice done to it. The modern pulpit would be saved from much sentimentality if the thousands of sermons which are annually preached upon these texts would contain some suggestions of the impossibility of these ethical demands for natural man in his immediate situations. Nowhere is the ethic of Jesus in more obvious conflict with both the impulses and the necessities of ordinary men in typical social situations (Niebuhr 1935:28).

Niebuhr understands this kind of ethic of love to be an "impossible possibility" for humans under conditions of sin, and therefore he rejects it as a basis for social ethics (except insofar as it stands as a judgment on all human acts, which must of necessity fall short of it). This love is not a possibility within history, and so we must be content with an ethic of justice on the social level: "Since this possibility [of a love ethic] does not exist, it is not

even right to insist that every action of the Christian must conform to *agape*, rather than to the norms of relative justice and mutual love by which life is maintained and conflicting interests are arbitrated in history" (Niebuhr 1964 II:88).

For Niebuhr, there is no question of arguing, as Barth does, that the command of God comes to us from moment to moment and may be different in different contexts. Rather, the command of God to love, not only our neighbors but our enemies *is* the normative principle on which ethics is based. However, it is the "impossible possibility" of the human situation (Niebuhr 1935:73). Thus, we must rely on the forgiving grace of God in light of our status as sinners.

Why should we prefer this tragic view of the human ethical situation to Barth's? After all, the chief benefit of Barth's ethics is that it recognizes that the sole norm of our action is God's command—everything else is disobedience and therefore sin. Isn't this perspective preferable to one that asserts that it is ever in any sense acceptable for human beings to sin?

First, both Bonhoeffer and Niebuhr would deny that sin is "acceptable" in the sense of justifiable before God. Rather, it is only acceptable in light of the ambiguity of the situation—an ambiguity which Barth denies exists. Furthermore, the acceptance of guilt on the part of the agent under these circumstances is done in full recognition of the gravity of the act committed. This is something that is fatally lacking in Barth's analysis.

Given Barth's three options—obey the scriptural norm, obey the command in the exceptional case, or disobey—there is no room for the recognition of the tragedy of human life which is ended in a situation of abortion, war, or self-defense. How can there be, when the action was positively commanded by God? The preservation of life which is entailed by the respect we are to show toward it is only applicable in the realm of God's sovereign will. Where God wills death, how can it be mourned? Where God calls for execution, how can one claim that it is sorrowful? Where God is the one who signs the death warrant, where can the sense of tragedy lie?

. On the other hand, the position taken by Bonhoeffer and Niebuhr allows one to recognize, first, that there is a norm to which human beings may point—a Christological norm—which calls us to love our neighbors and respect life under all circumstances. The realization of the impossibility of fully and consistently fulfilling the obligations of this norm is what allows the agent to fulfill that obligation as fully as he or she is able. That this involves the acceptance of his or her status as a sinner is a reality of living in a

fallen world, and points at least as seriously to the necessity for God's grace as Barth's theology does (perhaps more so!).

CONCLUSION

The objective which we set ourselves at the beginning of this paper was to explore the implications of Barth's ethical method for the problem of normativity. Barth's understanding of normativity was rooted firmly in the sovereignty of God as the electing God of grace who reveals Godself as our Creator, Reconciler, and Redeemer and was encapsulated in moral reflection on the question "what ought we to do?" However, we found that in its application this method was insufficient to deal with the complexity of moral decision-making precisely because it refused to acknowledge, on the one hand, the ambiguity of the human moral situation in light of our status as fallen creatures, and, on the other hand, the possibility that humans may be obligated in light of our fallen situations to act in a way which is contrary to the command of God.

Barth's refusal to allow for a norm which would in any sense "bind" God's sovereignty blinkers him with regard to the importance of an ethic of love as a critical principle for moral reflection. That we cannot achieve this norm is no judgment on the existence of the norm, but is a judgment upon us as sinners. Nor does it bind God to argue that this norm stands at the bottom of all ethical reflection. Rather, insofar as any Protestant theological ethic must be based on the witness of scripture, an exegesis of the assertion that "God is Love" (1 John 4:8) ought to be sufficient to allow us to make a start at developing an ethic with God's love as its chief norm, which we are called to emulate even in the midst of our fallen condition.

REFERENCES

Barth, Karl

1936-77 *Church Dogmatics*. Translated by Geoffrey Bromiley.
Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

Biggar, Nigel

- 1993 *The Hastening That Waits: Karl Barth's Ethics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich

- 1955 *Ethics*. Translated by Neville Horton Smith. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

Niebuhr, Reinhold

- 1932 *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- 1935 *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- 1964 *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Webster, John

- 1995 *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 1998 *Barth's Moral Theology*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

Whole Persons and Whole Communities: A Christian Ethics of Tears and Transcendence in the Context of AIDS in Thailand

JAMES F. THOMAS

Ay, thou art for the grave; thy glances shine
Too bright to shine long;...
And they who love thee wait in anxious grief
Till the slow plague shall bring the final hour.
Glide softly to thy rest, then; Death should come
Gently, to one of gentle mood like thee,
As light winds wandering through groves of bloom
Detach the delicate blossom from the tree.
Close thy sweet eyes calmly, and without pain.

William Cullen Bryant, *Consumption*

MANY TECHNICAL WRITINGS ON AIDS FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL, AS opposed to a religious (or specifically Christian), ethical perspective either adopt the stern, scolding tones of rights and duties or deploy the self-consciously impassive language of consequentialism. A typical passage reads like a litany of exercises in “lifeboat ethics”:

The AIDS crisis is producing a staggering number of hard choices. To what extent should the rights of others prevail over the privacy rights of AIDS patients? Do the benefits of mandatory screening of newborns justify the intrusiveness that such procedures entail? Should the rights of persons with AIDS to use nonapproved drugs take precedence over the need to conduct carefully controlled clinical trials? Is it always unethical for health care professionals to refuse to treat persons with AIDS?

Can militant activities, such as violent protest, be justified? (Reamer 1991:2)

The list goes on, and could go on, one supposes, *ad infinitum*, each item as bloodless and coolly abstracted from any *human* context as the last. Chapters on ethics in even some very good church-based publications, such as the most recent World Council of Churches Study Document on AIDS, contain similar language (WCC 1997:47–68). The contention of this essay is that, though these formulations of ethical problems may have some value, for serious and meaningful reflection on AIDS to occur, one must specify the particular *context* of ethical reflection and action, and that reflection must be embedded in and instructed by *tradition*. This is simply to say that questions concerning an issue as complex and subtle, striking as close to the heart of what it means to be human, as AIDS, questions that force us to confront the difficult questions of life and death, suffering and hope, ultimate meaning and ultimate value, an ethics based on deontology may not lead us very far, and one based on utilitarianism might lead us into bad places.

A more suitable framework for Christian reflection on the ethical dilemmas posed by AIDS is, I will argue, provided by the contextual ethics associated with the writings of theological ethicist Paul Lehmann. This will be demonstrated with specific references to one particular instance of Christian AIDS ministry with which I have had extensive and intensive involvement. This is the work carried on by the AIDS Ministries Office of the Church of Christ in Thailand (hereafter referred to as CCT-AIDS).

The argument proceeds in four parts. In part one, I briefly outline the process by which Paul Lehmann's *koinonia* ethics interrogates a concrete human situation in order to draw out its ethical dimensions. Next, I apply Lehmann's process to the particular case of HIV/AIDS in Northern Thailand. In part three, I identify what I view as some deficiencies in Lehmann's ethics, and I offer as a corrective an added human emotional content that sharpens and strengthens this ethical system's *a priori* commitment to justice for the oppressed and marginalized. I do this by drawing the feminist criticisms of Rita Nakashima Brock and Sharon Welch into dialogue both with Lehmann's approach and with the existential suffering of people living and dying with AIDS in Thailand. Next, I show how ethical reflection guides the religious and specifically *inter-religious* aspect of the Christian ministry of CCT-AIDS. I propose the term *tears* as a shorthand denotation for the level of emotional engagement with suffering that I find in the work of Brock

and Welch, and which I find to be a necessary part of an appropriate Christian ethical response to HIV/AIDS. Similarly, I offer the term *transcendence* as a shorthand denotation of that dimension of every human experience of joy or pain that draws us into an encounter with that which transcends and transforms that experience, i.e., the Holy, or God.

PAUL LEHMANN'S KOINONIA ETHICS AS A MODEL

Ethical action is a matter of so having lived that God will recognize that one has been on the track of God's doing; of having lived in the confidence that at the point of one's ethical failure God will surround one with the promise and assurance of his forgiveness. The complexity of the actual human situation, with which a koinonia ethic tries seriously to deal, is always compounded of an intricate network of circumstance and human interrelationships bracketed by the dynamics of God's political activity on the one hand and God's forgiveness on the other. It is always in such a context that the Christian undertakes to determine what he is to do in the world.

Paul Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*

From the above summary of ethical action, we can distill two pre-eminent theological foundations, and one pre-eminent anthropological foundation, that undergirds Lehmann's *koinonia* ethics. The theological foundations are: (1) that God is doing something in human history, and (2) that God's doing is marked by concerns for forgiveness, grace, healing, and wholeness. The anthropological foundation is that human realities are complex, intricate, and interrelated. No fact of human existence, like no person, ever stands on its own, unrelated to the corporate aggregate of facts and persons. Lehmann thus aptly refers to his ethics as an ethics of *koinonia*. It finds both its groundedness (i.e., the site of ethical reflection and action) and its goal (i.e., its *telos*) in the Christian *koinonia*—the community of believers gathered around the Word of God.

Decision-making in Lehmann's ethics is a three-stage process of interrogating the human situation in light of what God is doing in the world. Being confronted with a question or ethical problem, one asks first, "What is going on here?" (Niebuhr 1963:63–4) The ethicist then proceeds much like a social scientist, or, if you would rather, a detective: amassing data, building

background, seeking to understand the role of, and engender some degree of empathy with, the perspective of all the actors in the drama. Once one possesses adequate data to understand the historical and cultural background and the present dynamics at work, one then proceeds to ask the second question: "What is God doing in this situation?" It is at this point that Lehmann's ethics intersects with hermeneutics, as we circle back from our own historical moment to interrogate the Scriptures and the Christian tradition. It is akin to a "reality check" or a moral compass reading, for invariably Lehmann's answer is: "What God is doing in the world is setting up and carrying out the conditions for what it takes to keep human life human" (Lehmann 1963:124). To some of Lehmann's critics, this sounds like a slogan, but in Lehmann's ethics it is not so much a fixed datum or hardened dogma as it is a touchstone or beaconlight, for the contextual character of the system means that contingency, fluidity, and revisability are of its essence. Lehmann writes:

[A] *koinonia* ethic is a concrete, relational ethic in which the possibilities and the actualities of the human situation are continually breaking down and continually running out into what God is doing to put them together again. If one doesn't believe or has no sense for the fact that God can and does pick up the pieces, then one is indeed reduced to the dismal alternative between the irrelevance of ethical absolutism and the expediency of ethical relativism. But if one does believe and lives by the fact that God is picking up the pieces, it is incumbent upon one to be clear about where and what the pieces are (Lehmann 1963:143).

Having made himself clear on the first two questions, the ethicist-investigator is then prepared to ask the third question in this three-step process, the practical question: "What am I, as a believer in Jesus Christ and as a member of his church, to do?" (Lehmann 1963:124)

The AIDS Ministries Coordinating Office (CCT-AIDS) was founded in Chiang Mai, in February 1993, after a year of intensive study and data collection commissioned by the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), to enact an answer to this third question.¹ In the following section, I endeavor to replicate Lehmann's three-stage process of investigation and reflection for the

¹Entirely unrelated save in name to American or British church denominations such as the United Church of Christ, Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, etc., the CCT is Thailand's national congress of Protestant churches.

ethical situation of HIV/AIDS in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand to show how the course of the work of CCT-AIDS is determined by its context.

A LEHMANNIAN ANALYSIS OF THE AIDS CRISIS IN THAILAND

What is going on here?

In October 1995, the Kingdom of Thailand's Public Health Ministry estimated that approximately one million Thais—nearly 2% of a total population of 59 million—were HIV-infected.² Since that time, given better testing and reporting techniques and greater public awareness and understanding of the virus, the official figures, which were unduly low at the start, will have grown enormously. The cost in lives and wasted human potential, and the strain on the country's health care delivery system and national economy, have been immense. In late 1995 and early 1996 in some of the provincial hospitals in Northern Thailand people were dying at a rate of ten per day. Moreover, there are some villages in Chiang Mai, the ancient northern capital, where one can, like the young mother Gotami in the story of the Buddha, literally walk from one house to the next for vast stretches and not find a single household that has not experienced a death from AIDS.³

The highest percentage of these deaths is among young men and women between the ages of 18 and 40, people with half-grown children, half-built

²The data presented, including statistics, are accurate representations of the state of the AIDS epidemic in Thailand in late 1995 and early 1996. As noted above, I was deeply involved in ministry in this situation for the three and a half years preceding March 1996. I have not, however, returned to Thailand since, and the actual conditions of both the epidemic itself and the work done to address the suffering will have changed dramatically in the intervening time. The picture of "what was going on" contained herein may therefore be compared to a photograph of the years 1992–1996. Any extrapolations beyond 1996, while possible, are not made from firsthand observation and participation.

³The story from the Buddhist literature has Gotami, grieving the death her young child, approach Gotama Buddha to ask of him some incantation or some powerful rite that will restore her child's life. The Buddha instructs her to go search out and bring back to him some mustard seeds from a household that has not known death. Though she does indeed search far and wide, she is unable to find such a house, and returns to the Buddha forlorn, but ripe for enlightenment, for she has learned within her own being and through her experience the truths of death and impermanence.

houses, half-dreamt dreams, who are just hitting their stride as builders of families and contributors to their society and nation. To be sure, AIDS has entered every echelon of Thai society, but the brunt of the burden in this epidemic has fallen on day laborers and seasonal workers in tasks such as construction and agriculture, the migratory character of which takes people away from the traditional social restraints of village and family life.

The main mode of HIV-transmission is through *heterosexual* contact, and the engine that drives the epidemic is the culturally ingrained proclivity of Thai men for sexual adventurism, predominantly with prostitutes, but also with female acquaintances both before and beyond the bounds of marriage. The cultural epicenter of the disease is thus, in a much more pronounced way than in most Western cultures, the family, and typically women and children suffer because of the sexual misbehavior of errant husbands and fathers.

The first positive blood test for the HIV antigen in Thailand was reported in 1987. However, it was not until the early 1990s that comprehensive strategies to slow the spread of the epidemic and to provide appropriate care and treatment of persons living with HIV/AIDS began to emerge. In a scenario that has been repeated in virtually every society which AIDS has entered, in the early stages of the story of AIDS in Thailand, the Thai government spent years sowing fear, demonizing AIDS, and, by implication, its carriers, and practicing denial.⁴ Most of all, it sought to protect Thailand's image abroad, thus safeguarding its important tourism industry—the second largest sector, after agriculture, of the Thai economy. Other sociological institutions that have traditionally been expected and able to provide palliative care and concern for people in crises, e.g., churches, Buddhist temples, farmers' co-operatives, women's guilds, and other community groups, were similarly slow in recognizing the immense need and in taking on their role as agents of healing.

If one looks with unclouded eyes, the answer to the question, "What is going on?" necessarily encompasses more than simply the invasion of the

⁴ One of the earliest and most grimly memorable of the Public Health Ministry's AIDS prevention campaigns was predicated on a slogan, which, loosely translated, pronounced that "AIDS means death." In another example, an educational program conducted by a university hospital and heavily financed by the Thai government erected signs at the outskirts of villages that had participated in its two-day seminars declaring them as "AIDS-Free Zones."

population by a virus with a voracious appetite for white blood cells. HIV/AIDS does not exist in a vacuum. Even a much more resilient virus than HIV would have no opportunity to fester and spread throughout a society and feed on its rotting moral sinews the way HIV has if it were not for a diverse array of factors working in sinister harmony to create environmental conditions that allow such proliferation.

The spread of HIV into Thailand and its circulation and proliferation throughout Thai society are bound up with developments in the economic, sociocultural, and moral *milieu* that create conditions hostile to human relationship and foster estrangement between persons, within families and communities, between communities and their natural surroundings, between persons and their natal communities of shared history, traditions, and experience, and between people and all that they had formerly held sacred. This is not the place for an extended treatise on international economics, but to understand fully the effect of AIDS in Thai society one must examine closely the expansion of Western (and Japanese) industrial capital into Thailand during and after the Vietnam War years—an expansion that welded the Thai economy to the global market and riveted its once-staid and self-sufficient agriculture-based lifestyle to a frenzied concern for capital production. The effect in Thailand of the market processes that have been commonly called “globalization” has been to commodify not only the Southeast Asian rain forest,⁵ but also prime rice paddylands⁶ and the very lives, loves, and labors of Thai persons.⁷ The last two decades of globalization of economic systems and the westernization of Thai values and tastes have caused many young men and women to leave the social protection of village life in order

⁵ The forested area of Thailand has been reduced due to logging, both licensed and illicit, of these forests for valuable teak and sakwood timber, from roughly 75% portion of the total area coverage in 1930 to less than 10% currently.

⁶ “In the water there are fish, in the paddy fields there is rice.” So ran an ancient Thai proverb with a lineage back to King Ramkhamhaeng in the late thirteenth century C.E. However, these winsome, optimistic words with which Thai people formerly assured one another that they were not in any danger of starving have more recently been emended with a caustic irony by standup comics and disillusioned development workers who recite: “In the water there are chemicals, and in the rice fields there are condominiums.”

⁷ An old man, the father of a person living with HIV whom the author visited on several occasions, provided a poignant illustration of the extent to which human beings have been reduced to mere factors of production. Sitting on the veranda

to seek employment, education, social opportunities, and ways to spend their money in the cities.

Thus AIDS, appearing at a time when people's communal immunities are depleted, has become a dread scourge, and everyone who contracts HIV, or who is even suspected of having been in contact with it, is met with fear, hostility, scorn, and abandonment. Small wonder, then, that individuals, families, and communities engage in denial for so long rather than seeking out medical advice and proper dietary regimens. When their health at last does give out, and the secret comes out, such persons, who no longer contribute to, but rather drain, the household economy, suffer a devaluation of their dignity and worth as human beings in the sight of their relatives and neighbors. This is the cruelest inhumanity of AIDS: not what it does to the body—as horrid as that is, at least that can be understood clinically—but the widening of the societal fissures within a community, and the ruptures that this creates in humanity's collective soul.

What is God doing?

I stated above that Paul Lehmann's constant answer to the question "What is God doing?" is that God is continually engaged in the activity of "making and keeping human life human" (Duff 1992:11). Theological ethicist Nancy Duff, herself one of Lehmann's former students, has called this divine activity a process of "humanization" (Duff 1992:11). Duff notes, however, that this formulation is sometimes criticized for its vagueness, especially in light of certain *negative* connotations that are commonly pressed upon the notion of humanity. Duff notes, for example, that many of Lehmann's critics question whether he in fact means what he thinks he does by his formula of humanization, and why, if he does, humanization is considered useful or desirable as an ethical ideal (Duff 1992:12). It is not clear, these critics claim, whether Lehmann uses the term normatively or descriptively. Duff answers these criticisms by summarizing Lehmann's understanding of humanity as defined by three characteristics: Human beings as *creatures*, as *sinners*, and as *believers* (Duff 1992:14–21). It is the interaction of these three aspects of

outside his house, a questioner cast his glance at the rice fields behind him through a little copse of trees, and asked, "Are you planting rice this year?" The old man wagged his head in the direction of his son, trembling and sweating from the effects of HIV-related tuberculosis and stomach distress, and said, "My buffalo's broken-down. What can I do?"

human personhood in tensive co-evolution with one another that moves persons in Christian community towards what Lehmann calls "maturity." Lehmann's concept of humanity begins with limitation and existential standing-under-God-ness, and proceeds to perceive and analyze our fallenness and moral incapacity, but culminates in faithfulness in response to Christ's claim on us. The answer to the critics, then, is that Lehmann is being neither normative nor descriptive when he discusses humanization, because the *telos* that is achieved in Jesus Christ *transcends* both. Duff summarizes this threefold embrace concisely with a theological observation: "As Lehmann points out, the Christian church has never included in its creeds a confession of faith in humanity. Rather, we confess our faith in Jesus Christ, through whom God reveals not only God's self but human identity as well" (Duff 1992:13).

"Christian ethics," writes Lehmann, "aims not at morality, but at maturity" (Lehmann 1963:54). Thus, "making and keeping human life human" could be restated as a fostering and nurturing of the conditions under which human growth towards maturity is possible. In one place, Lehmann describes his understanding of maturity as "the integrity in and through interrelatedness which makes it possible for each individual member of an organic whole to be himself in togetherness, and in togetherness each to be himself" (Lehmann 1963:55). Human maturity is thus a corporate experience, an experience of and in *koinonia*, and any improvement in the conditions of growth for any one person necessarily implies an enhancement or enrichment of the quality of existence for all. The obverse of this is that any perceived improvement of these conditions of growth for any particular segment of the whole that is *not* reflected in a greater corporate well-being is thus aberrant, abnormal, and contrary to community.

Lehmann defines maturity more succinctly in Christian language as "human wholeness" or "the new humanity," and identifies the "empirical church" as a "bridgehead of maturity" (Lehmann 1963:55). This does not, however, mean that he is so idealistic about the institutional church as to believe that it has always exhibited the mature life of *koinonia*. Nor does he deride, dismiss, or demonize ethical impulses arising from outside the church, if these participate in the process of humanization. He *does* claim that the church is a bridgehead, but he also maintains that in other contexts there may be other bridgeheads. Lehmann thus guards against complacency or triumphalism by stating that maturity is "always being achieved and in some sense already achieved" (1963:131).

We should be careful to heed the “in some sense” and to acknowledge the processual character of God’s project with humanity. Thus when, at a later point in this discussion, I seek greater specificity by describing human beings as basically relationship-seeking and meaning-making creatures, the emphasis will be on the present-participiality of these verbs. It is in part this present-participiality which makes Lehmann’s contextualism an open ethics, which is alert to, receptive of, and in dialogue with the movements of God’s Spirit from beyond the bounds of the institutional church (Lehmann 1963:145f; esp. 156–9).

CCT-AIDS was not the first Christian organization to develop and implement a practice of ministry for and with people living with AIDS in Thailand, although it was the first to consciously eschew prosyletization in favor of a more pastoral and ecumenical approach.⁸ But before CCT-AIDS began its work, there were already allies-in-waiting among particular Buddhist organizations, such as a hospice/terminal care center founded by a monk, a meditation center specializing in helping people living with HIV, and agencies of the Thai government such as the Ministry of Public Health. The non-membership of these groups and individuals in the institutional church would not have implied for Lehmann, nor did it for CCT-AIDS, a non-participation in the work of God’s graciously moving Spirit.

What am I, as a believer in Jesus Christ,
and a member of his church, to do?

As a contrastive prelude to an explicit elaboration of an ethical response to the above question in terms of contextualism, I will briefly mention two alternative ethical proposals that CCT-AIDS has had continually to confront and by its praxis implicitly to critique. The first is an absolutist, deontological sexual ethics of purity along strictly constructed biblical lines. This approach has often resulted in a visceral and vigorous denunciation of persons living with HIV/AIDS, as in the statement by a Thai church elder that “Real Christians won’t get AIDS.”⁹ Too often, such an ethical approach ends with the claim that AIDS constitutes God’s punishment on sexual immorality,

⁸AIDS Ministries Coordinating Office. Annual Report to Funding Agency (April, 1994).

⁹An elder of the congregation sponsoring the event made this statement to me at a church-based event promoting HIV/AIDS awareness.

separating out the wheat and the chaff in the church.¹⁰ As the epidemic progressed into its middle years in the mid-1990s, this strain of judgmentalism, though virulent at first, was weakened and attenuated (though never, regrettably, snuffed out) as one after another congregation had to come to grips with sons and daughters of their flock, church officers, and relatives of church officers, who became ill and died from AIDS-related illnesses. It became, for all but the most hardened moralists, too theologically uncomfortable to assume that all of these active and contributing members stood under God's unremitting judgment.

The second ethical method to challenge the contextualism of CCT-AIDS, one that remained a viable option for much longer than the deontological option, is a form of political and social consequentialism. Guided by the utilitarian doctrine of "the greatest good for the greatest number," this ethical stance has been willing to sacrifice the safety and welfare of a certain small segment of the population in order to safeguard the majority against infection. It was most prevalent in debates on whether quarantining of people living with HIV was necessary. The rationale, especially from a macro-policy standpoint, is difficult to dispute. But very often situations to which the consequentialist calculus was applied were flawed due to faulty data. For instance, some formulations of the "greater good" argument would be invoked for firing a seropositive but asymptomatic hotel restaurant manager or expelling from a village daycare center an untested otherwise healthy four-year-old boy based on his parents' blood test results, despite the infinitesimal risk accruing to colleagues and schoolmates in these two cases.¹¹ In both cases, more accurate information regarding means of HIV-transmission would have forestalled discriminatory and unjust expulsions from work and school.

It might be stated as a rule that instances where the "greater good" doctrine could legitimately be invoked decreased over time as accurate and clear knowledge of HIV and its modes of transmission increased. Nevertheless, it reflected a strong (and ultimately dangerous) impulse in communities just

¹⁰In a paper which he read at a consultation in Chiang Mai on Communicating AIDS Concerns, sponsored by the Christian Conference of Asia, Mr. Prasit Saetang turned this same image of the winnowing fork against those who argued for separatism or a denial, based on moral principles, of ministry with people living with AIDS. Prasit stated that AIDS was indeed a winnowing fork, but its criterion of separating, or determining the true and false followers of Christ was compassionate involvement.

¹¹ These examples are based on actual case data from CCT-AIDS.

beginning to grapple with the questions posed by HIV/AIDS: the desire to “be rid” of the problem—to be, as the signs outside some villages (falsely) proclaimed, “AIDS-Free Zones.” It has taken a long time for the realization to sink in that for a virus with an incubation period as long as (perhaps) ten years¹² and that is in Thailand contracted primarily by means of an activity (i.e., visiting brothels) whose cultural lineage is long and well-entrenched in male social mores, the “problem” simply will not “be rid of” that quickly.

In a focus group discussion, a Thai churchwoman asked why the government could not find an island somewhere to send people whose blood tests came back positive. Passing over the obvious logistical and justice-related issues of confidentiality and consensuality in testing, the focus group leader cut straight to the heart of the matter by asking in response: “Suppose, just suppose, by some happenstance of fate your own blood test came up positive—or your son’s or your daughter’s or your husband’s—*would you want to go to that island?*” The churchwoman, shivering with what was apparently equal parts consternation, existential fright, and sudden vivid insight, blurted out the Thai equivalent of “Not on your life!” This incident is described to show that what is missing from the utilitarian calculus is the *human* element: some recognition that we are having to do here not with pieces of machinery, as in a broken-down airplane engine, but human beings, with real flesh, fear, passion, and dreams.

In contrast to the failed deontology, by which Christians had sought to preserve themselves from moral stain as distinct from people with AIDS, and also to utilitarianism, by which Christians (and others) proposed to preserve their community from infection by violating the humanity of the already infected, the Christian contextual ethics of CCT-AIDS begins with the recognition of the very two realities that these other two proposals implicitly ignored or denied: (1) none of us is free of moral stain; we are all sinners; and (2) AIDS is already extant in the community, whether it is acknowledged or not. To combine these two truths is to come very close to envisioning the whole scope of the theological problem with which AIDS confronts us and of the human task in which CCT-AIDS participated: *The church has AIDS*—in a moral sense, in a physiological sense, in a sense which refers not to a crisis of human immunity but to a breakdown of hu-

¹² For reasons that are still not entirely well understood, but which may have something to do with climatic and dietary factors, the incubation period in Thailand is less than half that of many other places in the world.

man community—and the task, given this reality, is not to remove persons identified as carriers of the virus *from* our midst. Rather, by facing up to AIDS, we must learn by experience how to live positively with AIDS and remake the community into a zone of compassion, forgiveness, and healing in mutual relationship. What, then, is the believer in Jesus Christ, the member of his church in Thailand, to do? The answer offered by CCT-AIDS turns around two poles of concern: whole persons and whole communities.

Whole persons. An ethics adequate to the challenges of compassion and forgiveness in the age of AIDS must begin with an acknowledgement of the innate freedom, dignity, and infinite value to the community of each individual human being. This freedom, dignity, and value do not become null and void based upon the results of a blood test, the onset of symptoms, or one's being bed-ridden and hence of no quantifiable economic benefit to the family. The Christian ethics of CCT-AIDS is, therefore, provisionally in agreement with Immanuel Kant when he formulates his principle of the "Kingdom of Ends" (Kant 1964:100f.). Each unique human person deserves to be treated not merely as a means, but as an end in herself. We are called, then, to do whatever it takes to enable and empower persons to realize their humanity and their innate worth as persons, no matter what their condition. For CCT-AIDS, this means coming alongside the *particular, concrete person* who has HIV, getting to know her, learning from her, and accompanying her in her struggle for dignity and abundance of life. It means counseling her about whether or not to have a blood test or practically any other problem or question that she might raise.

It is also crucial to stress the aspect of *relationship*. Whole persons are not, as Sartre thought, self-inventors, "inventing values" and re-making humanity moment by moment with each new decision, without *a priori* claims, conditions, or imperatives (Sartre 1997:42–3, 94–5). Instead, wholeness entails a history of interaction and communication with others, by which both the individual members and the community as a whole mutually affect one another and have been shaped by tradition and generations of communal history. Persons, who are divorced, either willfully or not, from their own histories, contexts, and lifeways become impaired in their quest for wholeness.

Whole communities. I want to stress simultaneously the two aspects of the meaning of "whole." It is indeed whole communities, the aggregate social body, which concern us in *koinonia* ethics, and our concern is for their wholeness and healing. A *koinonia* ethics takes the health and wholeness of the community as paramount, because it perceives the community as both

the site and the source of healing in the AIDS crisis. Specifically, a *koinonia* ethics recognizes that the amelioration of community values and the dissipation of ancestral ties through the globalization of markets and culture weakens the immune response of Thai communities and renders them vulnerable to the depredations of HIV/AIDS.

This means that the specific level of suffering, anxiety, desolation, and desperation that any particular, concrete person with AIDS within the community experiences is a function of dynamics at work throughout the social system; and conversely, the degree to which a person retains her dignity, courage, and stamina in the midst of such an ordeal as AIDS is similarly a function of and a barometer of her surrounding community's wholeness and health. Local tradition and local custom are important markers of identity and demarcations of group sentiment. Where the sense of bondedness in a community of commonly held basic sentiments and shared values emerging from a common tradition and shared history and belief systems has been attenuated and everted by the influence of the incursions of global culture, the way to reviving community is through rescuing, reviving, and reconstructing traditions before they disappear.

Thus, everything done by CCT-AIDS has both an individual and a communal component. For instance, instructing the relatives of a man with oral thrush on how to cleanse his mouth can become an opportunity for community education. Neighbors and relatives are already gathered around in the man's home. They were not called in by the announcement a public seminar, but here they are, and the family seems not to mind. The values of individual freedom, privacy, and confidentiality espoused by some Western philosophical systems and most Western medical practitioners, are thus balanced with a communalistic concern for others in the group. Or, stated more bluntly, the way that Prasit Seatung, one of the original visionaries of the CCT-AIDS ministry model, stated in responding to AIDS activists from Western Europe at the 1994 meeting of the International Christian AIDS Network (ICAN), "What does all of this talk of rights really mean? Can you tell me what your word 'liberty' means which you use so much? Do you know what this word sounds like to me when you use it the way you do? To me it sounds like 'selfishness.'"

Because of the special nature of HIV/AIDS, both socio-culturally and epidemiologically, CCT-AIDS always does its work in full cognizance that the present patient's pestering, inquisitive uncle with liquor on his breath might well become the next victim of the disease. In the case of AIDS in the

Thai context, therefore, the distinctions between education and care, between prevention and pastoral care giving are false ones. Whole communities are at risk; whole communities are the goal.

To summarize, the *koinonia* ethics evinced by CCT-AIDS revolves around twin poles of concern, that for the humanization of individual suffering beings, and that for the welfare, beauty, and goodness of the community. These two poles are interrelated in the *koinonia*, and they both have to do with identity—with who we are and to whom and to what we belong. The ethics of *koinonia* rejects as a reductionist fallacy the notion that it is necessary to sacrifice one or the other of these poles, i.e., that one cannot simultaneously serve the interests of individual fulfillment and those of communal well being. The importance for this ethics of the ideas of belonging and of identity means that the two poles stand in continual tension and—like all such tension—cannot hang in perfect equilibrium for long; rather, the tension must necessarily resolve itself in one direction or the other, though never perfectly or completely. As soon as either of the two imperatives—for personal wholeness or communal harmony—vanishes, ethics gives way to oppression.

AIDS AND AN ETHICS INFORMED BY HUMAN TEARS

Thus far, I have sought to demonstrate how Paul Lehmann's contextual ethics can help to clarify and codify the process of ethical reflection engaged in by CCT-AIDS in the crises of families and communities effected by AIDS in Thailand. The alternatives to contextual ethics have been briefly discussed, and their criteria for discernment of ethical action have been contrasted with those offered by contextualism. I have argued that the criterion invoked in a deontological system (i.e., "What is the *right* thing to do?") leads in the case of AIDS to condemnation and abandonment of the person living with HIV/AIDS on moral grounds, which due to the nature of the epidemic turns back on itself to become self-condemnation and self-abandonment. I have also maintained that the criterion of discernment in consequentialist ethics (i.e., "What will yield the *good*, or the greatest *good* for the greatest number?") fails adequately to factor in the full *humanity* of the societal puzzle pieces that it seeks to arrange into the most efficiently running system.

My discussion in the final two sections takes as its basis the observation that, while Lehmann's contextual ethics avoids the pitfalls of ethical moralism and utilitarianism, it is, nevertheless, not itself failsafe. Its open-

endedness and conformability to a variety of contexts represents one of the strengths of Lehmann's ethics, but it can also become one of its greatest weaknesses, at times leaving the ethicist-investigator lost in a thicket of vagaries. An ethics that is as influenced by context as Lehmann's can become a tool of faulty interpretation and misinterpretation. To be sure, by focusing on humanization and *koinonia* as determinative values in his ethics, Lehmann erected a structure, or rather, perhaps, drew us a map, to help guide ethical analysis and reflection. However, even these determinative values are subject to definition, and in this somewhat bloodless and arcane process of definition and analysis, one must ask what prevents the system from succumbing to its own openness and proneness to be over-determined by context.

My suggestion is that we can be helped here by insights from feminist theological ethics that will safeguard Lehmann's three-step process of ethical inquiry from a potentially disastrous lack of human emotional content. In order to demonstrate this, I will draw on the work of Rita Nakashima Brock and Sharon D. Welch as conversants, arguing in this and the following section that what is needed to make Lehmann's contextual ethics a near-perfect fit for the work of CCT-AIDS in Thailand is a double injection of the element of passion in ethical reflection: *tears* and *transcendence*.

The first notion that I enlist from feminist ethics is Brock's concept of sin as psychological damage with roots in culture and experience. In a sense, this is merely an extension of the logic of Lehmann's option to treat descriptively (rather than strictly theologically) the human being as sinner in a way that emphasizes sociocultural realities rather than moral normativity. But as an extension, it lends depth, specificity, and added usefulness in a situation as subtle and complex as the sociocultural matrices of AIDS in Thailand.

Brock notes that human beings are "fundamentally relationship-seeking beings" (Brock 1988:4), and she defines *sinfulness* as "neither a state that comes inevitably with birth nor something that permeates all human existence, but a symptom of the unavoidably relational nature of human existence through which we come to be damaged and damage others" (1988:7). Clearly differentiating this conception of sin from the traditional Calvinist idea of original sin, she writes:

This ontological relational existence, the heart of our being, is our life source, our original grace. But we are, by nature, vulnerable, easily dam-

aged, and that vulnerability is both the sign of our connectedness and the source of the damage that leads us to sin (1988:7).

Formulated in this way, sin can be reconstructed not as an original flaw in our nature, but rather as a corruption or perversion of something that is fundamentally good. This works as well for the inarguably reprehensible prevalence of prostitution—trading in the flesh of young women, itself a cofactor in the spread of AIDS—as it does with sinfully self-righteous attitudes of church members who refuse to forgive and accept people living with AIDS. The former, using Brock's design, can be seen as an abuse and corruption of a basically good and wholesome aspect of our human nature, i.e., sexuality; whereas the latter is the monstrous result of a basically laudable social instinct run amok, i.e., encouraging virtue and quelling vice. Both kinds of sin, for Brock, are properly redressed not by punishment, but by healing.

Brock locates the source of this healing in what she calls *erotic power*. Hers is, like Lehmann's, a contextual ethics. To the set of three questions Lehmann would pose in examining an ethical situation, Brock would add a fourth: "How do I feel right now, how are others feeling, and what can I do to lessen all our pain and suffering in this context?" (Brock 1988:xiv) This question, the bridge from the descriptive question (Lehmann's first) to the question of appropriate or fitting action (his third), frees us to admit our emotional responses, the whole range from empathy to revilement, into the ethical calculus; in fact, it insists that we do so. Erotic power, as distinguished from what Brock calls "unilateral power," or domination, is

an energy that produces creative synthesis, and is enhanced by relationships that emerge from creative synthesis. It produces not fusion and control, but connectedness.... Erotic power integrates all aspects of the self, making us whole. Erotic power grounds the concreteness of our experiences of empathy, passion, creativity, sensuality, and beauty (Brock 1988:39).

The lesson for contextual ethics is that, once we have completed the hard work of investigation and description of "what is going on," our *tears* have moral significance. They can flow into God's own tears and draw us into God's path of healing and redemptive action. In their work of pastoral ministry among people and communities affected by HIV/AIDS, the staff of CCT-AIDS have

grown habituated to the nearness-to-the-surface of their own tears, and have become accustomed, though never inured, to their welling up.

Tears... for the young mother of two, her first only eight days old when her husband left her for another woman and has not been seen or heard from since. Without any formal schooling or job skills, she ended up working in a brothel for seven years until her second son was born. He was born with HIV. The ten-year-old older brother misses school regularly to care for both his little brother and his mother, both in advanced stages of illness.

Tears... for the young woman who returned from her five years working, supposedly as a seamstress, in Bangkok, to try to recover from AIDS-related tuberculosis, endured the recriminations and rebukes of her elderly mother for three months, and finally hung herself by the neck in her bedroom while her mother was at the market.

Tears... for the elderly Christian couple who, after notifying their congregation of their daughter's death of AIDS, waited for two days, while the corpse lay rotting, for the elders of the church to come and arrange a funeral for their daughter. When no one came, they went to the local temple abbot and arranged to have a Buddhist ceremony.

Tears... mingled tears of anger, joy, sadness, and amazement for the family of a young woman who, upon receiving a positive blood test result, went to have an abortion. Her husband, sick with AIDS-related illnesses, went along with her. They had not intended to get pregnant, not wanting to risk passing on the virus. But they had, and now they were only doing what they felt they had to save the little child from a short life of intense suffering. The pompous physician informed them that they were endangering his life and the lives of his family members by asking him to perform this risky surgery on an infected woman. The incensed husband stormed out of the clinic, dragging his wife along behind. Five months later, they had the baby—and his test result was negative!

As stories such as these are lived and shared, as they become mingled in our heritage with our own stories, the cleansing power of human tears, of empathetic passion, deepens, intensifies, and clarifies the exercise of asking ourselves, "What then, as a believer in Jesus Christ and as a member of his church, am I to do?"

Sharon Welch writes that in the ethics that she names an ethics of risk, "actions begin with the recognition that far too much has been lost and there are no clear means of restitution" (Welch 1990:68). One of the most significant barriers to wholeness that a person who has become infected with HIV

must breach is the unfulfillable longing to “turn back the clock” or to “take the virus out.” A swift sense of freedom, and an opening of once-beclouded horizons, is realized, once that person accepts the fact of seropositivity and determines to bend her back to the task of living positively with HIV. A thirty-year-old man once confessed to me a sentiment that, I believe, was just such a moment of illumination:

I’m glad I got the virus. If they discovered a cure tomorrow—No! I would not take it.... It’s only since I’ve known I was seropositive that I’ve come to realize how much my wife really loves me, and how much she means to me as well. It’s only now that I’ve gotten to know my kids and really spent time with them.... Before I would take any excuse to get out of the house—and there were always other women, and drinking all the time. I hardly knew my family at all. I barely knew myself.... No, I think it’s a good thing that I got this disease. It’s helped me to see what’s really important in my life. If tomorrow they announced on the news that there was a cure for HIV, I wouldn’t take it. I don’t want to go back to the way I was before.

It is painful, “knowing in one’s mind and in one’s heart that ‘it’s much, much, much too late,’ and continuing to mourn this loss, continuing to rage against the innumerable onslaughts against life” (Welch 1990:70). However, when grief and rage coalesce with daring action in the cause of justice and mercy, one often finds, distilled from the agony of this experience, “a profound, wrenching, far-from-sentimental affirmation of the beauty and wonder of nature, of human life” (Welch 1990:70). Reclaimed by wonder, by beauty, by a sense of purposefulness in even the most limited of lifespans, one finds the terrain suddenly cleared of delimiting factors, of fears of partial solutions, or of outright failure, and is thus freed to hope, risk, and embrace one’s destiny. The human tears that Welch associates with such feelings of wonder, beauty, hope, and daring—of destiny embraced—are related to, indeed are emanations of, a transformative and empowering encounter with *Transcendence*.

AIDS, CHRISTIAN ETHICS, AND THE TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD

In the second section, I outlined a Thai iteration of Lehmann’s ethics in the context of AIDS, culminating in two primary imperatives and ethical emphases: *whole persons* and *whole communities*. I posited there that these elicited an

ethics of relationality and belonging. I am now prepared to add one additional integral piece, also determined by an emphasis on relationships: *whole lives in relation to God*. The ethics explored and embodied by CCT-AIDS takes as granted that our lives are not our own, that God is a present reality to us, undergirding our strength, healing our strivings, and infusing all of our longings with a quality that transcends and transforms our instinct for mere self-preservation, thus turning all of our moments and days into sacred time.

According to this ethical stance, our phenomenal selves, our thoughts, words, and deeds as delimited by time, space, corporeality, and mortality do not constitute the final word on the meaning and purpose of our existence. This sets contextual ethics apart from those of Sartre and also of Kant. My earlier approval of the latter's concept of a Kingdom of Ends was qualified as "provisional" for precisely this reason. Each person is a child of God and must be treated as an end in herself—but not an ultimate end! For we have, to borrow Schleiermacherian language, "a whence and a whither" that relativizes our lives and efforts at the same time that it exalts and sanctifies them.

Hence, the one perennial piece of advice offered by CCT-AIDS to everyone who comes for counseling or support or whose home we visited, regardless of her station in life or the stage of her disease, regardless also of faith community, Christian or Buddhist, is for her to seek out ways to delve more deeply into the religious truths that she has been taught since childhood. All sufferers of this disease are counseled to wait with faith upon all that they claim as holy, for that deeply affecting and healing realization that, as physician Larry Dossey has written, "physical illness, no matter how painful or grotesque, is at some level of secondary importance in the great scheme of our existence" (Dossey 1993:36).

This means that, since roughly 90% of their pastoral clients are Buddhist, the Christian pastors at CCT-AIDS must, in order to be able to provide effective guidance and accompaniment along that path to religious insight, learn to "speak the language" of Buddhism as fluently as possible. This is so for several reasons. First, a resolution was reached early on in the history of CCT-AIDS that to take advantage of a person's vulnerable state, when she is weakened by disease, or perhaps near death, casting about for hope and uncertain who to trust, by forcing a program of religious conversion on her was plainly despicable. Moreover, the history of evangelism in Thailand suggested that such an attitude had erected more barriers than bridges for the Gospel of grace, as champions of the established traditions

and long-held beliefs invariably stiffened and turned people against the church.¹³

Second, as a practical matter, since people commonly sought out the help of our office only when it was simply too late medically to do much to extend their lives, there was not always a sufficiently spacious window of time in which to teach people the "new language" of the Christian gospel. Lehmann writes of the need for "a climate of trust" that would enable persons to discern "the human in us all" and "the new humanity, however incipient, of all men in Christ" (Lehmann 1963:130). The lesson of many generations of evangelists is that such a climate is *earned* through long-term faithfulness in relationship.

Third, it was the unanimous theological presupposition of the pastors at CCT-AIDS that such a move was in fact not required: that in fact, the Spirit of Christ broods over the teachings, symbols, stories, and meanings embodied in Theravada Buddhism, and that for persons whose moral foundations were laid with the planking of the Thai Buddhist tradition, these teachings posed an appropriate and adequate existential answer to the questions of suffering, meaning, and hope in life. It was understood making this move involved taking a theological risk, a risk indeed for which CCT-AIDS has been, at times, vilified and called a hothouse of heresies by many in the church, both in Thailand and overseas. It was and is, however, a risk that we were willing to take for the sake of the people with AIDS *who needed to hear of a salvation that they could understand and embrace*. For we were convinced that potentialities for healing and wholeness, as well as salvation and liberation, are inextricably bound up with one's sincere embrace of a religious tradition, a willing surrender to religious affections, and in one's particularity in suffering and hope being embraced and upheld by the Transcendent, as mediated through that particular phenomenal form by which He/She/It is knowable.

CONCLUSION

The tangle of issues implicated in the AIDS crisis in Northern Thailand is as complex as it is theologically sensitive and is rooted in the structure of Thai society and the values expressed in Thai culture. A Christian ethics in the context of AIDS in Thailand must be invested with the fluidity and open-

¹³See Herbert R. Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua* (Bangkok: Chuan Printing Press, 1984.), esp. pp. 12-20.

endedness to bring this situation's "intricate network of circumstance and human relationships" into revelatory and redemptive encounter with "God's political activity on the one hand and God's forgiveness on the other" (Lehmann 1963:141). Such an ethics cannot rest easy with facile talk of "duty" or of "the good," but is necessarily an ethics that takes into account the complex, multivalent contextuality of every human situation. It is, as I have sought to show, an ethics of healing and wholeness for persons and communities, of tears and transcendence, of sorrow and hope, and, most emphatically, of relationship. Paul Lehmann's *koinonia* ethics can serve admirably as a framework for ethical inquiry, while insights from feminist writers like Rita Nakashima Brock and Sharon D. Welch provide crucial determinative emotional content that relates this ethics directly back to the encounter with the transcendent God, the Creator and Redeemer of the universe, even the universe of faiths, the One God whose Son is Jesus Christ.

REFERENCES

- AIDS Ministries Coordinating Office (Church of Christ in Thailand)
 1994 Annual Report to Norwegian Church Aid (Overseas Funding Agency).
- Brock, Rita Nakashima
 1988 *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*. New York: Crossroad.
- Dossey, M.D., Larry
 1993 *Healing Words*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Dubos, Rene and Jean
 1952 *The White Plague*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company.
- Duff, Nancy J.
 1992 *Humanization and the Politics of God: The Koinonia Ethics of Paul Lehmann*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Kant, Immanuel
 1953 *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. New York: Harper and Row.

Lehmann, Paul L.

1963 *Ethics in a Christian Context*. New York: Harper and Row.

Niebuhr, H. Richard

1963 *The Responsible Self*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Reamer, Frederic G

1991 *AIDS & Ethics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Sartre, Jean Paul

1997 *Existentialism and Human Emotions*. Secaucus: Carol
Publishing Group.

Swanson, Herbert R.

1984 *Krischak Muang Nua*. Bangkok: Chuan Printing Press.

World Council of Churches

1997 *Facing AIDS: The Challenge, the Churches' Response*. Geneva:
WCC Publications.

The Popular Church in Brazil: Why It Didn't Liberate

A REVIEW ESSAY BY JOSEPH C. SANDS

Claiming the Virgin: The Broken Promise of Liberation Theology in Brazil. By Robin Nagle. Routledge, 1997, 224 pages.

The Brazilian Popular Church and the Crisis of Modernity. By Manuel A. Vásquez. Cambridge University Press, 1998, 302 pages.

Called for Freedom: The Changing Context of Liberation Theology. By José Comblin, translated by Phillip Berryman. Orbis Books, 1998, 252 pages.

These books all address the puzzle of why the Latin American poor are opting out of a church that has made a preferential option in their favor. Two are based upon doctoral dissertations: one in anthropology, the other in religion. The third is the work of a theologian with thirty years of pastoral experience in Brazil. Despite their differences, they all agree on a central point: the primary weakness of the progressive Catholic Church in Brazil has been the inability of its pastoral agents to connect with the world of the poor.

In *Claiming the Virgin: The Broken Promise of Liberation Theology in Brazil*, Robin Nagle studies a Catholic parish in a poor neighborhood in the northeastern city of Recife. She asks why consecrated politics and activist religion both attract and repel members of the local community. For two decades, activist pastors, formed in the theology and politics of liberation, had led the parish. When a new "traditionalist" pastor was appointed, one month before Nagle arrived to do her anthropological field work, the parish erupted in "schism."

This book would be better sub-titled: *The Broken Promise of the Liberationist Element in One Parish in Recife*. Nagle warns in the preface that she is no theologian. She rarely even cites theologians. The author, who actually has little to say about liberation theology, identifies it with what she calls "Liberationist Catholicism," or the movement of ecclesial base communities (CEBs). Her study is less about a contested theology, and more about a Christian community divided in loyalty to its leaders. Both factions accuse

the other of lacking truth, of blaspheming tradition, and of corrupting religious practices. In this way, the story is but another episode in the familiar history of the Christian Church over two millennia.

Nagle begins with a cursory history of the Roman Catholic Church from the apostle Peter, through the Portuguese colonization of America, to Dom Hélder Câmara and the ecclesial base communities of the 1970s and 80s. She emphasizes two crucial elements of the Catholic Church's history in Brazil. First, it has always had a weak institutional presence. Severely understaffed by clergy, the church never penetrated very deeply into Brazilian society. Consequently, the population developed its own peculiar Catholic tradition. Second, this "folk Catholicism" continues as a powerful force among a population, in large part, desperately poor. In the particular neighborhood of Nagle's study, the world of the poor is strengthened and consoled by the presence of a one ton statue of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição* (Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception). The Virgin will play a formidable role in community events throughout the first year of the "traditionalist" pastor's ministry.

The new pastor's controversial arrival received not only national but international attention since the local bishop had called upon the military police to escort him to the church door to claim possession of the key. Thus began an extended, contentious feud between those who welcomed and those who resented the transfer of leadership. The "traditionalists" and the "liberationists" battled one another about the possession of parish buildings, through the celebration of dueling liturgies, over the personal reputations of their leaders. The most contested issue was the presence of the Virgin. Who would be in charge of her annual celebration? More importantly, which side could legitimately claim her allegiance?

Nagle studies the potency of both "folk" and "liberationist" Catholicism by analyzing the discourse and rituals of the two feuding parties. She relates six narratives that ostensibly describe the same three events from opposing perspectives. She then discusses how both groups interpret the celebration of the sacraments according to their respective theological preferences. She concludes that the "traditionalists" define the sacred as dirtied whenever it is linked to politics, while the "liberationists" understand the sacred to encompass almost anything secular. The "liberationists" are so expansive that they even appropriate the label of their opponents. They claim to be the "real traditionalists" since their way of being church is likened to a model of the early church, based upon the sharing of resources.

In the last chapter, Nagle concludes that, in respect to the strategies used to perpetuate the conflict, both sides are as much alike as they are different. They both make use of the local media, are disappointed with their respective priests, and fear being ostracized by their sub-community. In the last five pages, the author wonders about the future of liberation theology. At least it continues in the work of community activists who now participate in various political parties and non-governmental organizations.

One frustration for a student of theology in reading this book is that Nagle makes numerous theological assertions without identifying their source. The reader never knows whether she is expressing her particular understanding or that of one of her interviewees. This is a glaring weakness since she spends an entire chapter analyzing how the members of both factions use and manipulate ritual for their own purposes. In the midst of her analysis, she seems to presuppose that the rituals possess a singular, universally agreed upon authoritative reality. Despite her historical generalizations, her theological ignorance, and her casual writing style, Nagle's study does contribute to understanding the scandal of the base community movement that, in large part, was guided by liberation theology. It places the blame on the pastoral agents who had dedicated themselves to the option for the poor, but could not appreciate the religious expression of the poor. In particular, the leaders were often repulsed by a "folk Catholicism" that paid more attention to the Virgin's intercession than to the military's intervention. The Virgin, meanwhile, was not offering the poor false consciousness, but protection and consolation in the midst of their miserable existence.

Miguel Vásquez's *The Brazilian Popular Church and the Crisis of Modernity* also focuses on how the presence of the Brazilian Church has diminished among the urban poor. Similar to Nagle, he asks why the poor are betraying their own interests and refusing to participate in a church that is actively working to transform unjust social conditions. He, too, grounds his analysis in an empirical study of a particular community not far from Rio de Janeiro. Unlike Nagle, however, he is a student of religion.

Vásquez begins by retracing the progressive stance of the Latin American Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council. He then places its liberationist project within modernity's belief in progress and the modern person's capacity to shape and control the future. The project of the popular church, though rooted in the gospel message, effectively relies upon modernity's totalizing reading of history. It has a *telos* and an emancipatory drive, embodied in the actions of a collective subject. Unfortunately, the church's

eschatological reading of the modernist project could not withstand the challenge of political and economic realities.

According to Vásquez's analysis, disrespect for folk Catholicism was certainly evident among pastoral agents, but it was not the primary obstacle. The real failure of the pastoral project was that the re-enchantment that the popular church did offer simply lacked plausibility. The utopian project lost sight of the fragility and even the futility of the struggle for liberation at the grassroots. By reifying the poor into a collective emancipatory agent acting from below, the pastoral agents ignored the heterogeneity of the poor. They also underestimated the structural obstacles to popular mobilization. It is not the lack of appreciation for an affective world-view, but the naïve understanding of the capitalist world system, that led the popular church into crisis.

The insecurity of inflation and the constrictions of structural adjustment compelled the urban poor to give priority not to a utopian project but to immediate survival needs. The conservative agenda of the hierarchy was certainly a factor in diminishing the appeal of the popular church. The democratic political opening also deprived the movement of its exclusive hold on civic participation. Pentecostalism, with its stress on the local and the personal, continues to be an attractive alternative. More importantly, however, the emancipatory project collided with the need to be pragmatic. Otherworldly transcendence gave way to the imminence of patronage politics. In this disintegrating social context, CEBs merely managed to attract the attention of a stable minority. The reliance of the popular church upon small groups of "elite" poor stood in the way of drawing closer to the vast majority of the poor, and of creating a mass movement.

Does the popular church have a future? Vásquez is optimistic about possibilities that focus on local strategies in support of defensive, household-based initiatives. The popular church must stop universalizing the poor and learn more about the particulars of how globalized capitalism disintegrates urban neighborhoods. It also needs to expand its (urban) strategy to include more than the training of organic intellectuals who often look with condescension on their neighbors' piety and politics.

Vásquez's excellent work, while focused on a particular pastoral experience, pays close attention to the larger context: theological and ideological, political and economic. He thoughtfully and powerfully engages the vast literature of the base community movement. His nuanced study attends to the various internal and external factors that have contributed to the decline of

the popular church. He succeeds in demonstrating the overwhelming capacity of late capitalism, especially as it is manifested in Brazil, to obstruct and challenge utopian, emancipatory projects. Notwithstanding the ability of macro forces to constrain the choices of the urban poor, they need not spell the end of utopian ideologies. Rather, they force such projects to defend and cherish the more mundane dimensions of life, finding in them an opportunity for transcendence.

José Comblin's *Called for Freedom: The Changing Context of Liberation Theology* is a septuagenarian's reflection on the Roman Catholic Church at the start of the new century. This is a general work, aimed at a wide audience, in which the author asserts that he did not intend to teach anything new. Yet both his novelty and his frankness provoked a stir in the popular church when his book was first published in Brazil in 1996, under the title: *Cristãos Rumo ao Século XXI: Nova Caminhada de Libertação*.

For Comblin, the world today is a much more complicated place than the one in which he began his work in Latin America. Gone are the Cold War and the National-Security State. Gone, too, is any socialist alternative for Latin America. Even more striking, gone is the world in which religion was out and politics in. Now, in the midst of technological innovations, religion has returned and politics has disappeared. These complications have forced Comblin to reduce his expectation about how much the Church can influence the world. Though left with a limited role, the Church urgently needs to offer the world a new evangelization.

Unfortunately, the Vatican promotes a new evangelization without ever saying what the gospel is. The Church lives with the illusion, argues Comblin, that its strength is derived from its constant defense of objective "truth." The importance of religion for the laity, however, is not truth, but affections. Religion takes on importance when it acknowledges subjective experience. When the Church offers only its catechism, its liturgy, and its bureaucratic structures, all will be lost.

Although he is deft in his attack on Vatican preoccupation with defending dogma and maintaining bureaucracies, his most provocative comments are directed at the liberationist church and its pastoral agents. He scolds them for becoming discouraged. Pastoral agents seem to have confused the option for the poor with an option for victory. While the pastoral agents wanted to build a social movement, the poor were migrating from the countryside to the city. In the city they experienced more freedom than they had had before, and were anything but passive, resigned, and alienated. Their dreams

were quite different from the dreams of the agents of liberation. Comblin agrees with the other two authors under review here when he asserts that liberation needs to be constructed upon the events of everyday life.

Although the context of liberation theology has changed, the theology itself is not in crisis. However, it needs to reorient itself to the true drama of the human person. Liberation theologians need to recognize that there is no single subject, but a vast multitude of subjects, many of whom are indifferent, uninterested or simply too busy to pay attention to utopian projects. Therefore, the church must struggle even more to enter the world of the impoverished majority. What is necessary is a more empathetic solidarity, a more loving commitment.

In his theological chapters, Comblin argues for the importance of personal liberation. Comblin is responding to the reality that freedom has become an alien concept in the Roman Catholic Church. He seeks to modify the reality that most people, including pastoral agents, have not been prepared or educated to encounter God in their personal experience. Unlike the canon of liberation theology that focuses on the historical Jesus, Comblin relies on Paul's letters to the Romans and to the Galatians to make his case for gospel freedom. He gives Paul credit for having written the most theologically sophisticated exposition of subjective freedom.

To the critics who blame liberation theology for having driven the poor out of the Catholic Church into Pentecostal Churches, Comblin counters that the true culprit is clericalism. Even the base community movement could not free itself from the clerics who continue to become more bureaucratic and less accessible to real people. Patriarchal parish life does not lend itself to establishing horizontal relationships. Comblin, unlike so many of his colleagues, has no disparaging remarks for the charismatic renewal, be it Catholic or non-Catholic. On the contrary, he asserts that it at least offers bread to those who would otherwise receive stones.

Comblin agrees with Vásquez's assessment of modernity's superficial optimism. The rational organization of societies and the super abundance of technologies have not been enough to expand the realm of freedom. What is still lacking is the ability to value the common good above individual good. One of the most valuable lessons he has learned in the past three decades is that positive change will not take place without the participation of the ruling class. Unfortunately, this class is totally indifferent to the fate of the majority, and incapable of solidarity. Although the more prosperous members of society will have to be forced to make sacrifices,

this is a role for the state, and not the church, to accomplish. The church should organize volunteers while the state should increase its efficiency to collect taxes.

The least provocative part of Comblin's work, for a North American reader, is his three chapters devoted to economic, political, and social liberation. The novelty here is that his social analysis does not rely on the insights of Gramsci, but on the works of Robert B. Reich, Alvin Toffler, and Al Gore. Novelty is especially present in Comblin's recognition of the mistake liberation theology made in distancing itself from political liberalism. Even alleged democratic freedoms are an important starting point in building a free society.

The various tendencies of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America have paid the price for either insisting on remaining undisturbed and unchangeable, or insisting on unrealizable and unrealistic programs. Clericalism has played the key role in both equally unhelpful strategies. Comblin's hope for the next century is that the laity will trust in their own experiences of faith. He hopes that their own personal experiences of liberation will offer them the inspiration and courage that he does not expect to see among the clerical ranks.

Unlike the popular church in Central America, where the liberationist pastoral agents were more clearly at odds with the hierarchical church, the popular church in Brazil was once noted for its close relationship with the Brazilian bishops. Initially, this led to the hope that the connection to the poor would help to make the Catholic Church less conservative. These three works argue that it was the close relationship to the church, its clericalism, its preference for universalizing totalities, and its authoritative methods, that served to keep the pastoral agents from the world of the poor. Despite their religious discourse, the impatience of pastoral agents with the religious sensibilities of the poor kept them removed from the everyday reality of the poor. Despite their social analysis, the impatience of the liberationists left them isolated from the forces at work in Brazilian politics and economics. Of course, thirty years ago the popular church could not have imagined the extent of the challenge they were undertaking. They began their *caminhada* in an age when all seemed possible. Today those who continue the journey will not be expecting all-encompassing solutions. The popular church will remain true to its original desire inasmuch as it listens to the voice of the poor—a voice that still cries out to the God of justice, while it continues to sing praises to the God of love.

Proverbs of Ancient Sumer: The World's Earliest Proverb Collections. By Bendt Alster. CDL, 1997, xxxvi and 548 pages, plus 135 pages of plates (all in two volumes).

This work contains “all the known unilingual Sumerian proverb collections” (xxx), and some Akkadian bilingual versions are also included as glosses. It includes proverbs from school tablets (usually single proverbs), excerpt tablets (selections from literary compositions), and entire proverb collections (usually about 200 or more entries). Commentary on most of the proverbs is found in the second volume.

Alster's intent is a presentation of the Sumerian proverbs that invites the engagement of both specialists and non-specialists in the critical study of the material. To that end, he has included all such critical apparatus as is required by the scholar of Sumerian language and culture, and also has been scrupulous in laying out that apparatus in an unobtrusive manner, allowing the non-specialist unhindered access to Alster's fine translations. This principle—to meet the demands of inner-discipline review while inviting interdisciplinary engagement—is applied evenly throughout, and its realization seems to be a special gift of Alster's.

Volume I includes preface, introduction, and the texts; Volume II, Alster's commentary, a bibliography, glossary, list of museum and collection numbers, and 133 plates of (splendidly lit) photographs and drawings. The greater part of Volume I is allotted to the texts themselves. Typically, the entries begin with a “composite” of the manuscripts, if such can be reliably made from the versions. The manuscript versions of that entry follow, using Gordon's sigla where possible and museum numbers elsewhere. The composite and the following “score” of versions are both relegated to the left column of the page, reserving the entire right column to Alster's English translations. The primary texts are presented in sign-by-sign transliteration. Alster has set aside the task of phonetic transcription as outside the scope of this work. In the translations, Alster has chosen to “render the meaning of the Sumerian words as closely as possible,” reserving his freer, more readerly translations for the commentary in Volume II (xxxv). This approach acknowledges that the meanings of many of these proverbs are far from certain, and invites the reader to engage the proverb in its more difficult, less pre-interpreted state. Even the more interpretive translations sometimes offered in the commentary are carefully justified and offered with due caution.

Alster's introduction merits special mention, embracing such headings as What is a Proverb?, Why "Proverb Collections"?, History of Mesopotamian Proverbs, Provenance and Dating of Manuscripts, Proverbs in the Sumerian Scribal Education, Social Setting of the Proverbs, Stylistic Feature of Sumerian Proverbs, Publication History, and Scope of this Edition. For the scholar already knowledgeable in Sumerian literature, this introduction serves to lay bare Alster's presuppositions regarding definitions and genre, dating, social setting, the role of the scribal schools, etc., and thereby invites rigorous and informed peer review of Alster's methodology and product. For the non-specialist, the introduction is an excellent teaching tool or refresher course: dates are presented by period name and by absolute date (e.g., "Isin-Larsa period, ca. 1900–1800 B.C.," xvi); the relation of Sumerian language and culture to the Semitic in Mesopotamia is reviewed in brief; and the definition and classification of the literary term "proverb" is given careful due.

The layout of the book is among its great strengths, especially that of the texts. By keeping apparatuses of particular entries with those entries, and moving the translation alone to the right column, Alster has allowed for readers of varying sophistication in Sumerian literature. The scholar with little knowledge of the ancient Near East can happily stay with the translations and commentary. One schooled in Akkadian will recognize many common and oft-repeated Sumerian logograms, and may find herself tentatively identifying such grammatical morphemes as possessive suffixes. The specialist in Sumerian literature will appreciate the ease with which the critical apparatuses are matched with the appropriate texts, and will also be impressed with the marvelous plates which conclude Volume II.

The decision to move the commentary and the plates to a second volume is commendable: the reader can easily have these helps open on the table alongside their respective texts, without the distraction of flipping pages. There is no wrong point at which to enter this work: a perusal of the texts will quickly secure the reader's interest, and lead in turn to such questions as are addressed in the commentary, the introduction, and the plates.

It should be added that the book itself is very attractive and well made. Bound in navy blue with gold leaf, its 8 1/2 x 11 inches lay flat easily and display well: shelve it where it can be seen, or leave it on a table.

Special features of this book's post-matter include an extensive bibliography (headed "Literature"), an index of museum and collections numbers, a glossary of syllabic signs and logograms, and the great quantity of well-lit

photographs and clear drawings. It should be mentioned that the "glossary" is actually an index of signs referencing the entries that include them. No English definitions are assigned, for instance, to the logograms listed in the glossary.

There can be no doubt that Alster's *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer* has significant value both within his discipline and to those fields of study which are only tangential to it. The scholar of the ancient Near East who lacks facility in the Sumerian language may find herself irresistibly drawn to take it up. Indeed, given the repetition in the proverbs of key character types and themes, this book may be a fine companion piece to any sound Sumerian grammar, perhaps suited to intermediate coursework. The Wisdom scholar, especially one attracted to issues of gender in Wisdom, will be intrigued by the knowledge that many Sumerian proverbs are in the *emesal* dialect (commonly used by women), or in other ways suggest a female voice. The teacher of Sumerian religious literature will find for her students a helpful corrective to the notion that all Sumerian thought must have been oriented to the mythopoetic. Such oft-arising issues as the role of class or of the scribal schools in the creation or transmission of Mesopotamian or Palestinian Wisdom material cannot help but be informed by these collections. Finally, the proverbs themselves are simply a joy to read: comfortably course, sometimes scatological, occasionally unfathomable, they offer an ear turned to the common parlance of an intriguing people and cast both the familiarity and the strangeness of that people's world into easy and often humorous relief.

—G. BROOKE LESTER

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Religion and the American Civil War. Edited by Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson. Oxford University Press, 1998, 422 pages.

Religion and the American Civil War is a collection of essays that grew out of a 1994 conference at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. The participants at the conference sought to answer the question, "What, if anything, did religion have to do with the Civil War?" (3) From the essays included in this work, the answer to that initial question appears to be "a lot." That is, religion and the American Civil War are two topics that relate to one another in fascinating and revelatory ways.

The editors introduce the book by pointing to the curious absence of scholarship on the topic at hand. While the American Civil War currently garners much attention in academic and popular circles (as evidenced by the success of the Ken Burns PBS series), little focus has yet been given to the religious history of the war. A few works have touched the edges of the subject (notably *American Apocalypse* by James Moorhead and *Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda* by James Silver), but for the most part scholars have not thoroughly explored the war as a religious experience and event. According to the editors, this volume does not try to provide all of the answers, it simply seeks to lay a foundation on which other efforts can be built.

The work tries to break the silence surrounding the relation of religion and the Civil War by allowing each contributor to “explore religion’s role from his or her own scholarly perspective” (4). The result is sixteen essays that approach the topic from a variety of angles. Each perspective is important, and each essay is a welcomed addition to the small but growing body of knowledge concerning the religious aspects of one of America’s most important events. Taken together, the essays are a major contribution to American religious history.

The editors open the book with a lengthy introduction that describes the origin and scope of the project. The introduction also includes effective summaries of the essays that follow. The summaries are useful to the reader in several ways. They lay out the course to come, pointing to how various essays relate to one another, and preparing the reader for some of the themes that are common to the different essays. The summaries steer the reader toward the essays that might be of particular interest, and they serve as a helpful review once the book has been finished. Each essay is summarized in at least a paragraph in the introduction, and this gives the reader an accurate feel for the work from the outset.

Religion and the American Civil War is not a collection of works dealing with Southern Studies, though a student of that field will find the works useful. Instead, the essays give attention to Northern and Southern issues from both generalist and specialist viewpoints. The initial essay by Phillip Shaw Paludan gives an overview of “what happened to Christianity, and especially Protestant Christianity, in the Civil War” (21). His story provides a helpful entry point, especially for those who may not be well versed in Civil War history.

With the exception of the final essay and the Afterword, the rest of the essays are placed into three broad categories: Ideas, People, and Places. Some

of the essays treat topics that one might expect in a work on this topic. For instance, Mark Noll examines how Northerners and Southerners read the Bible in relation to the slavery issue, Daniel W. Stowell reveals the providential meaning that Stonewall Jackson's death had for religious persons in the Confederacy, and Paul Harvey explores how white Southern Baptist ministers preached a message of Southern redemption through sacrifice that eventually "hardened into an orthodoxy that dominated southern evangelical historical interpretation for a century to come" (168). Another expected subject, Abraham Lincoln, is addressed by Ronald C. White Jr., who contributes a fresh and in-depth analysis of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address as a work of religious significance.

Some of the other essays treat topics that often are not associated with the American Civil War. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese focuses on how the Civil War affected the religious imagination of women writers, and Randall M. Miller offers a look into what it meant to be Irish and Catholic during the war. One of the most surprisingly relevant and enlightening essays is written by Charles Wilson Reagan, who compares the religious aspects of the American Civil War to those of the civil wars in Spain and England. In the Afterword, James M. McPherson reminds the reader of some of the common themes that occur in the essays. He mentions the masculinization of Christianity, belief in just war, the transition from antebellum moral reform to Social Gospel, and the transformation of slave churches into centers for black communities as a few of the themes that are tantalizingly addressed in the various essays and need further work.

Although each contributor writes in a particular style, for the most part the essays are presented in language that is readable and comprehensible. The arguments tend to be presented in a way that does not expect the reader to bring a great deal of Civil War knowledge to the table, though the essays should still remain interesting and engaging for the expert. There are a few instances of tangled academic writing that require a third or fourth reading, however, the payoff is worth the effort.

The editors provide a list of contributors, which will be welcomed by newcomers to the field who are unfamiliar with some of the authors. The list is also useful for introducing some of the lesser-known contributors. Curiously, the entry for Ronald C. White Jr. is absent from the list of contributors. The notes for each work are conveniently placed at the end of the essay, although footnotes might have encouraged the reader to consult the notes more often. The notes serve as a nice series of bibliographies for the topic,

containing useful references and acknowledgements. The book includes an index, although the topics listed in it are rather sparse. It might have been helpful to include secondary authors in the index, so readers could easily see where a particular author was consulted.

Religion and the American Civil War stands as a welcomed addition to the study of American religious history and to the study of the Civil War. Historians and scholars of religion will appreciate the fresh analyses of the period, and popular readers should enjoy most of the essays.

—CHAD W. HALL

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Encyclopedia of Early Christianity, second edition. Edited by Everett Ferguson, Michael McHugh and Frederick W. Norris. Garland Publishing, 1997, xxvii and 1213 pages.

An already valuable reference tool has been made even better with the publication of its second edition. The changes between the first and second edition are not merely cosmetic, although these differences are attractive.

For those unfamiliar with the first edition, which contained 983 pages in one large volume with some illustrations and maps, it offered entries covering people, places, doctrines, liturgical practices, art, artifacts, architecture, and a number of modern scholars. The articles gave clear definitions, followed by explanations of development and historic significance as warranted. At the end of each article was a brief bibliography that gave, as applicable, the available ancient language editions, translations, and then useful starting points in the secondary sources. Articles on writers and themes having to do with theological issues in the early Christian period were prominent. Particularly helpful were the articles on persons, which identified their surviving works by their numbers in the *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* (CPL), *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* (CPG), and *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG), in addition to a selection of translations and secondary resources.

The second edition does not make any major changes to the structure of the project, it only expands the coverage. With a more eye-catching layout of just over 1200 pages, the two sleek volumes of the second edition set in bolder and more readable print the collection of articles, which are accompanied by even more illustrations and maps. The first edition enlisted an ecumeni-

cal team of one hundred and thirty five scholars, mainly from the English-speaking world, to write 977 articles. The second edition expands those numbers to one hundred and sixty-seven writers who have contributed 1,245 entries.

There has also been an expansion in the time frame addressed. The first edition covered the life of Jesus up to about 600 A.D., with a few additional entries beyond that such as Bede and Maximus the Confessor. The new edition moves into the seventh century and beyond at many points, principally as part of its effort to present better coverage of Eastern Christian traditions. Articles covering Aba, the fourth-century Syrian theologian, and Theodore Abu Qurrah, the eighth/ninth-century monastic bishop who wrote in Arabic, Syriac, and possibly Greek, are but two examples of the expanded Eastern coverage.

Aside from terms curiously omitted from the first edition, like "Abbot," additions include more modern scholars, like Pierre Courcelle and G. D. Mansi—perhaps in response to Gerald Bonner's review in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (April 1991)—as well as plans for a number of city sites such as Corinth, perhaps in response to Edgar Krentz's review in *Biblical Archaeologist Review* (March 1992). Also added are articles on methodological issues like historiography and sociological interpretation, as well as world religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. Surprisingly, the coverage of the religions of the Roman Empire is somewhat thin. The second edition adds general articles on Pagan Religion and Mystery Religions to the articles already found in the first edition on Isis and Mithraism. However, other articles on the variety of deities, cults, and practices of pagan religions (e.g., Cybele, the Eleusian Mysteries, and theurgy) would be helpful.

The first edition contained a chronological chart that featured select secular rulers, bishops of Rome, church leaders and writers, and events; a map of the Roman Mediterranean world; and a detailed index, with the pages of major entries given in bold. The second edition adds more headings to the chronological chart and another map that covers the late antique world from the Balkans to Japan and from Siberia down to the Indian Ocean. Oddly, the index has been made less helpful. In the first edition there was extensive cross-referencing. This was particularly helpful for names, terms, and places that were not entries unto themselves. Take for example Aurelius, bishop of Carthage and a friend and ally of Augustine of Hippo. In the first edition, the index lets one know that, although

he does not have his own entry, he is mentioned under the entries on Carthage and Donatism. In the second edition's index he is not to be found. I hope that in a possible third edition these sorts of entries will be restored to the index.

Although we have noted several areas that could be improved, the editors are to be commended for what they have produced. They have taken a reference work that was of great use and improved it in a host of ways. There are few other tools as versatile for both novices and experts. The only comparable English language work is *The Encyclopedia of the Early Church* edited by Angelo Di Berardino, translated by Adrian Walford, and with foreword and bibliographic amendments by W. H. C. Frend (Oxford University Press, 1992). Although Di Berardino has the edge in comprehensiveness—particularly on geography and archaeology, where its entries, maps and illustrations are more extensive—it is currently out of print. Ferguson et al.'s *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* 2nd edition is in print and, although it is perhaps too expensive for the average individual, it should be seriously considered for purchase by scholars interested in early Christianity.

—HORACE SIX-MEANS
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

God's Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission. By R. Marie Griffith. University of California Press, 1997, 275 pages.

Challenging the notion that the religious beliefs and practices of American evangelical women merely reflect those of their male counterparts or larger denominational trends, R. Marie Griffith's *God's Daughters* demonstrates that the group Women's Aglow, the largest women's interdenominational evangelical organization in the world, reveals distinct patterns of female devotion. According to Griffith, evangelical women's worship reflects particular life experiences, and an analysis of this piety reveals large classes of women for whom abuse is commonplace and intricately related to their devotion. Among Aglow members gender often strongly determines the range of future life prospects as well as the vision of what comprises a successful, faithful life. Griffith notes that life experience frames the religious desires and needs of the women, and that their worship patterns reflect the complex web of negotiations that characterize their experience of both the divine and the self.

The six chapters in *God's Daughters* analyze the members of the parachurch organization in varying fashions utilizing an ethnographic approach. The first chapter places Women's Aglow in the context of American culture. Chapters two, three, and four treat Aglow spirituality, including religious practices such as healing and the importance of secrecy, openness, and intimacy for Aglow members. The final two chapters treat the issue of female submission and the roles of discipline, authority, and sacrifice for Aglow members. Griffith finds that the practices outlined represent a shift, a reinvention of Christian womanhood in the late twentieth century in light of the changing roles of evangelical women.

Griffith shows that conversation and testimonial play a central role in evangelical Aglow meetings. Reflecting the new ethnographic turn in the study of American religion, she carefully recounts her observations of Aglow meetings, recording the centrality of laughing and crying among evangelical women, along with the sometimes overpowering need for intimacy with other women at any cost. Aglow women often frame the narrative of their personal testimonials in terms of a drama of suffering, death, and rebirth. They additionally view their internal battles for personal self-mastery as futile, finding at the end of the fruitless struggle a climax in total surrender to Jesus. These women reportedly experience freedom as they unshoulder their burdens and allow Jesus to take complete control of their lives. They also participate in activities reflecting heightened anxiety over food and fat, expressing the need to turn to God for fulfillment of their hunger rather than ordinary, physical food. Aglow provides practical assistance with dieting, transforming it into a latter-day battle against the flesh over which spiritual victory must be claimed by the faithful.

Griffith shows, however, that this typical pattern of fleshly surrender and control is not explicitly avowed within the group's leadership structure. Rather, Aglow holds explicitly egalitarian views about its membership and promotes itself as a sisterhood or a "network of caring women"—though this ideal is not always reflected in practice. Griffith includes the testimonials of abused or extremely distraught women in the narrative, while also recounting the ways in which Aglow members navigate these women towards spiritual healing. She finds a connection in some instances between the banishment of demons and personal shame and grief over abuse, along with specific patterns concerning how stories are to be told and to whom, or how resistance to authority is allowed and where it must be restrained among evangelical Christian women.

While contemporary evangelicals often tend to consider the biblical injunction exhorting women to submit to their husbands as a central problem facing church membership, among Aglow members the issue of submission is backgrounded by the more important themes of intimacy, healing, and transformation. Power, however, has many different faces for these women. Griffith's subtitle, "the power of submission," reveals the multi-faceted and complex negotiations involved when women agree to submit wholly to God, rather than to their husbands, as their ultimate master. Griffith shows that submissive behavior can at times mask subversive behaviors, while also allowing women to garner greater power in domestic life. *God's Daughters* thus additionally explores as a subtheme the enduring question regarding whether there are more "appropriate" roles for women and how such roles are related to religious belief and culture.

Griffith refreshingly refrains from jumping on the critics' bandwagon or offering a feminist proclamation on evangelical women. Instead, she carefully presents the diverse landscape of the religious lives of traditional women, from the glossy women's periodicals of the faithful, to the regional hotel conferences of evangelicalism, to the family rooms of the Christian right, understanding evangelical women on their own terms as much as possible. Some reviews of *God's Daughters* have criticized Griffith for not being sufficiently "critical" of evangelical women. From the standpoint of the study of religion, however, the lack of a particular kind of feminist gridwork or other explicit political agenda in Griffith's work is one of the primary strengths of her ethnographic approach.

While feminist criticisms of evangelical women have made valuable contributions towards understanding the destructiveness of the acceptance of images of submission and control, there has been a dearth of work that attempts to view these women on their own terms. It is on this score that R. Marie Griffith's book finds its greatest success. As Griffith shows, evangelical women's unique piety cannot be understood in terms of male denominational worship patterns, or as the puppeteered extension of a sexist male agenda. As other less traditional women do, evangelical women negotiate for power in their homes and families. *God's Daughters* is an excellent contribution to this neglected subculture of American religion and should be read by all who seek a greater understanding of evangelical women's piety in the late twentieth century.

—STEPHANIE STIDHAM ROGERS
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Building a Protestant Left: Christianity and Crisis Magazine, 1941–1993. By Mark Hulsether. University of Tennessee Press, 1999, xxxix and 374 pages.

Why a study of the journal *Christianity and Crisis*, known to many simply as *C&C*? Hulsether asks this question rhetorically in his introduction, just as I asked the question years ago when my friend Mark first told me about his proposed dissertation topic. In retrospect, I realize my reasons for asking the question were located in my own social context at the time. As a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York during the early 1980s and later as one who occasionally wrote for *C&C* from my work in Nicaragua, I took *C&C*'s existence for granted. I also found the ongoing discussion in *C&C* as to whether liberals open to liberationist perspectives or neoconservatives were the best representatives of Reinhold Niebuhr's legacy to be worse than irrelevant, given that U. S. foreign policy was actively contributing to the deaths of tens of thousands of Central Americans each year. Today, after the demise of *C&C* and my own move from Nicaragua to Princeton, I recognize that Hulsether's highly nuanced study of *C&C*'s transformation from an advocate of Cold War realism into a patron of various liberation theologies makes an important and much needed contribution to the study of late twentieth-century U.S. Protestantism.

Hulsether lays out his theoretical framework for analyzing *C&C*'s transformation in his introduction. He uses the methods of the cultural historian—namely the idea of paradigm shift and theories of cultural hegemony—to show how the multivocal liberal Protestant tradition for which *C&C* spoke shifted its alignment with larger sociopolitical forces. In his work, Hulsether attempts to bridge the gap between religious studies, which have tended to focus on the conservative side of the current polarization within the U.S. religious scene, and broader studies of U.S. social movements and cultural history, which either ignore religion altogether or offer only simplistic critiques of the right. Hulsether also offers his work as a corrective to liberationists who have been overly critical of liberals and have failed to recognize the contributions of those like Niebuhr and John Bennett in opening U.S. Protestantism up to new perspectives.

Building a Protestant Left provides a highly readable chronological account of *C&C*'s life and internal debates set within the larger sociopolitical context. The origins of *C&C* lie in the Social Gospel movement of the early twentieth century. The journal was founded in 1941 when Niebuhr and oth-

ers defected from *The Christian Century* because of the *Century's* advocacy of pacifism in World War II. Niebuhr and colleagues argued for Christian realism, which they deployed from the standpoint of the elite throughout the 1940s and 1950s. During the 1960s, within the context of the civil rights movement and in response to strong voices from the southern hemisphere speaking within the ecumenical movement, the leaders at *C&C* began to identify more and more with those outside of the power structures. By the late sixties, issues such as the rise of Black Power and the war in Vietnam fractured the liberal consensus at *C&C*. As a result of the ensuing polarization, in which each side choose to emphasize different aspects of the liberal tradition, neoconservatives such as Paul Ramsey and Michael Novak eventually left. From the late 1970s until the end of its career *C&C* provided a forum for debate within leftist Protestant circles as it integrated feminist perspectives, including a strong critique of heterosexism, and responded to theologies emerging from many cultural contexts. Hulsether points out that because so many theological voices interacted within *C&C*, it provides a good context for exploring the complex interrelationships between these different perspectives.

In his final chapter, Hulsether focuses on *C&C's* production process. This focus on the material, institutional, and personnel resources for the production of discourse supplements his generally poststructuralist approach. He finds *C&C's* financial situation generally comparable to that of other journals of opinion, religious and otherwise. As many institutional funding sources followed the neoconservatives when they turned to the right during the 1980s, the staff of *C&C* failed to develop a survival strategy that would allow them to keep publishing in the face of the rising production and mailing costs; all of this despite the fact that at the end *C&C* was actually bringing in as much in contributions as it ever had.

Running through this book, and related to Hulsether's analysis of *C&C's* demise, is a larger argument about the future of U.S. Protestantism. The argument runs as follows: The liberal mainline denominations are in decline because they are failing to retain the younger generation, which usually abandons organized religion altogether. A socially-concerned, activist form of Protestantism would motivate these younger people to stay in the churches. Denominational leadership, by abandoning progressive causes and failing to support radical spaces for dialogue such as that offered by *C&C* in order to appease conservatives, is following a self-defeating strategy that will alienate even more young people from the churches. Hulsether asks, "In the

new century, what role will Protestant social thought play for upcoming generations who live in this post-New Deal landscape of the super-rich and the unemployed, the technological elite and the prison-industrial complex, the Promise Keepers and battered wives, the militias and the scapegoated migrant workers?" (p. 266) For those of us who, like Hulsether and myself, are teachers of the next generation, this question is one of vital existential concern as we seek to engage public religion from the viewpoint of those outside of the structures of power.

—KARLA ANN KOLL
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Darwinism Comes to America. By Ronald L. Numbers. Harvard University Press, 1998, 216 pages.

When Darwin's theory of evolution hit American shores, religious believers could not ignore its theological implications. In a collection of chaptered essays, Ronald Numbers' *Darwinism Comes to America* narrates some of the history of Protestant responses to evolution. The first narrative focuses upon how these responses have changed over time. The second narrative shows how complicated these responses have been. American Christians have never simply "accepted" or "rejected" evolution.

The Introduction consists of short versions of these two narratives, narratives which are then extended in the various chapters. Numbers first presents a brief history of Christian responses to Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859). Due to the wealth of evidence for biological evolution presented by Darwin, Numbers argues that a liberal/conservative split occurred in late nineteenth-century Protestantism. Neither the liberal nor the conservative, being Christian, could accept Darwin's denial of divine action in the prehistory of life on earth, and both agreed that somehow God was involved. Liberal Christians, though, went further and actively accepted the idea of biological evolution, as well as the idea of an earth many millions of years old.

Conservatives, on the other hand, felt that Darwinism—and its assumption of humanity being a cousin to an animal—undermined morality and religion. Faced with a profusion of evidence for a vastly ancient earth and a diversity of prehistoric life-forms, conservatives had three options: interpret the days mentioned in Genesis 1 as ages of many

years (the day-age theory), envision a series of cataclysms over a huge time period separating the first and second verses of Genesis (the gap theory), or claim that Genesis 1 describes 24-hour days, with Noah's flood as the means by which fossils had been formed and extinctions brought about (flood geology).

From the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, flood geology proponents were primarily Seventh-Day Adventists. Seventh-Day Adventist theology, taking its cue from founder Ellen G. White's prioritizing of scripture over science, was quite literally based on the idea that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. As Numbers (himself having been raised in a fundamentalist Seventh-Day Adventist family) explains it, without a literal 24-hour day, fundamentalist Adventist doctrine would have been severely challenged. Other conservative groups, such as the Holiness and Pentecostal churches described in chapter six, were less amenable toward flood geology, not only because of the gap theory found in the *Scofield Reference Bible*, but mostly due to the "Wesleyan emphasis on the heart over the mind, on behavior over belief" (135). Chapter two details the evolution of the word "creationism" from meaning any idea incorporating divinity's intervention in new forms of life, to its late twentieth century meaning (initiated by non-Adventist fundamentalists) limited specifically to flood geology.

The second narrative of the Introduction aims to complicate the simple dualism of evolutionist and creationist. On one end of the spectrum of late twentieth-century approaches to evolution are naturalistic evolutionists, followed by theistic evolutionists. Both accept evolution, but differ on whether divine action is involved. Next come the intelligent-design theorists, who see any evolutionary process as powerless to explain much of the complexity found in nature. Next come the old-earth creationists (day-agers and gap theorists), and, lastly, scientific creationists (flood geology supporters).

The simple dualism of evolutionist and creationist has often been superimposed upon regional differences in the U.S. certainly, and the 1925 Scopes trial (chapter four) did not mitigate such assumptions. In chapter three, Numbers contends that the South was not as opposed to evolution as commonly supposed. In fact, laws making the teaching of evolution a crime were found in only three states in the 1920s revival of anti-evolution sentiment, and, Numbers posits, such laws were enacted *because* of the relatively successful spread of evolutionary ideas in the South. In his preliminary analysis of eighty eminent naturalists of the nineteenth century, Numbers

argues in chapter one that extant documents indicate that Darwin's general idea of evolution (if not his idea of the particular mechanism for evolution) was widely accepted simply because it fit with the prevailing mood of naturalism. For most scientists, God was no longer a good scientific hypothesis. (The appendix contains brief, biographical sketches of the eighty eminent nineteenth-century naturalists.)

Darwinism Comes to America demonstrates that the history of science and religion in America is not one of simple warfare between two mutually incompatible modes of thought. Instead, there is a continuum of thinking on the subject of evolution, and a history to that continuum. Neither liberal nor conservative Christians were (or are) monolithic. The South was diverse, and what we now call "creationism" has historically been a minor position within the larger conservative set of choices. Numbers, via judicious use of primary sources, convincingly documents the complexity of it all.

The most frustrating part of reading *Darwinism*, however, is the amount of repetition among the chapters. Each chapter was originally either a lecture (chapters one and four), a conference paper (chapters two and three), or a journal article (chapters five and six). Since the book did not originate from one long argument, but rather from a collection of separately written works, some measure of repetition would have been expected. After having read the Introduction, however, one is not warned that what follows are independently written essays. Only in the extensive endnotes, in which Numbers shows his command of the primary sources, does one discover that.

The audience for *Darwinism* seems to be those students of religion who are already aware of the broad contours of Darwinism in America. Numbers' book focuses on the major figures in the conservative religious responses to Darwinism, saying little about the more liberal proponents of, for instance, theistic evolution. If one did not already have some knowledge of the history of religion and Darwinism in America, one might conclude that most Christians were in fact conservative. If part of an introductory course in science and religion, *Darwinism* would best be used as a supplementary text to the excellent, more comprehensive works on the subject, most (if not all) of which are cited in the endnotes.

A professor of the history of science and medicine at the University of Madison-Wisconsin, Numbers is not a creationist, nor a believer, as he somewhat cryptically states in his 1992 award-winning work, *The Creationists*. Yet, in that earlier book and this latest one, Numbers takes great care to por-

tray creationists sympathetically and to stay out of the creationist/evolutionist debate over who is right and who is wrong. Given his own creationist upbringing, that concern is understandable and the mark of a true historian. However, creationists and their opponents are often in battle over control of school boards and text books, and it is not clear that *Darwinism Comes to America* can remain aloof from that struggle.

—ERIC L. THOMAS
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

African American Women and Christian Activism: New York's Black YWCA, 1905–1945. By Judith Weisenfeld. Harvard University Press, 1997, viii and 231 pages.

In *African American Women and Christian Activism*, Judith Weisenfeld offers a rich picture of New York City's black Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) during its first forty years. Along with its history of the YWCA, the book illuminates a significant slice of New York history, tackling race relations in the city, the development of New York's African American community, and Harlem's transformation into the center of African American culture. Weisenfeld argues that despite the primarily secular image of the YWCA today, the women in her study had religious motivations. Excluded from formal religious leadership, they expressed their religious concerns through activism in organizations such as the YWCA. Understanding their work, Weisenfeld suggests, is critical to understanding African American religious life in the period.

The YWCA movement began in the late 1850s—and became a national organization in 1905—as a way for middle-class white women to bring Christianity to young working women in the cities through Bible studies and social activities. The founders of New York's black YWCA sought to use the organization's flexible structure to meet the needs of young African American women in the city. As Weisenfeld shows, these leaders were well-educated women who were involved in wide networks of church and social service organizations. In a public context of racial violence and discrimination, and of stereotypes of black women as sexualized and immoral, they worked in the YWCA to construct an “alternative home space” for young black women. They emphasized domesticity, attempting to socialize young women into Christian respectability. In so doing, they both created a safe

private space for black women and contested the public constructions of black womanhood—challenging neat distinctions between public and private.

The black female leadership immediately experienced racial tensions with the white women at the local and national levels of the YWCA. White women implicitly placed these black women in structurally subordinate roles despite their impressive educational qualifications and organizing experiences, which were often superior to those of the white women. White administrators allocated fewer funds to the black YWCA than to their other branches. They refused to include any black members on the city-wide Executive Committee, and instead appointed a subcommittee to “oversee” the affairs of the new African American YWCA branch. Despite these discriminatory practices, African American women in New York chose to continue to stay involved with the organization. They had confidence, Weisenfeld concludes, in the possibilities of YWCA structures and goals, and in their own abilities to engage in the movement in significant ways to meet their needs.

Weisenfeld argues against a simplistic reading of middle-class blacks as simply mimicking middle-class white concerns—a historiographical tendency that has often celebrated rural and working-class black culture as more “authentic” than that of the black middle class. The YWCA was sometimes criticized by contemporaries for elitism and worldliness, but rather than simply echoing these critiques Weisenfeld uses them to explore the differences between African Americans in the early twentieth century. Urban elites valued “cosmopolitanism” and culture, while many of their critics upheld strict evangelical codes that were rooted in southern black working class experience. Weisenfeld takes these class-based tensions seriously, but ultimately defends the leaders of the YWCA as women who worked with the resources available to them to meet the needs of their community—and whose priorities were as “authentic” to African American experience as any others.

The YWCA’s participation in World War I efforts brought several positive benefits, Weisenfeld suggests. Many African Americans argued that the blatant racial discrimination both within the military and throughout U.S. society made a black boycott of the war effort appropriate. But black women throughout the YWCA chose to highlight their patriotic support of the war effort. They challenged negative representations of black women in national YWCA publicity material, established “Hostess Houses” for African American servicemen abroad, and provided housing and employment

services for the numerous black women migrating to American cities for wartime work opportunities (146). In Weisenfeld's estimation, these wartime efforts ultimately provided the black YWCA with new empowerment, increased resources, and a new level of recognition at the national level of the YWCA.

The black YWCA moved in 1913 to Harlem, a community in transition from its historically Dutch roots into the cultural hub of African American life in the 1920s, and Weisenfeld discusses the YWCA's participation in these developments. This YWCA became "Black America's Community Center," offering multiple services and educational programs, lodging for many young black women in the city, lectures and performances by prominent black intellectuals and artists, and meeting space for hundreds of black clubs and organizations. By 1940, descriptions of the YWCA rarely made mention of religion, focusing instead on the cultural and social service concerns of the organization. Weisenfeld argues, however, that the YWCA remained rooted in a Christian vision that expanded to include apparently "secular" issues. The national YWCA embraced the social gospel of liberal Protestantism in the early twentieth century, and New York's black YWCA followed the same pattern, with the addition of racial justice to the social gospel platform. The social gospelers and the YWCA in the interwar period, Weisenfeld suggests, often equated Christianity with "democracy" and "social justice," and established programs to promote these ideals (158).

Although Weisenfeld insists on the Christian motivations of the African American YWCA, some readers in religious studies may wish for more attention to what was specifically religious about this organization. What role did Bible studies and other more specifically religious activities play in the life of the organization? Were there ever tensions between the traditional evangelical morality of many blacks and the whirl of dances and social activities sponsored by the YWCA? To what extent did these women articulate a theology grounding their work, and to what extent did their articulation of this theology change? Weisenfeld offers little on these questions beyond her argument that the YWCA increasingly adopted social gospel ideals. Nevertheless, she does challenge us to expand the boundaries of religious history, and to recognize a primarily social and cultural center such as the YWCA as an important expression of black women's religiosity.

Weisenfeld has provided a valuable picture of middle-class black women's activism in the early twentieth century. Her intended audience is American

historians, but readers in any field who wish to learn more about race, class, and gender in early twentieth-century America—and to think about the boundaries of religious studies—will find much of value here. The book includes substantial notes and a useful index. *African American Women and Christian Activism* is a significant contribution to African American history, women's history, and to the history of Christian activism in the twentieth century.

—TISA WENGER
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week. By Susan Verdi Webster. Princeton University Press, 1998, xxi and 298 pages.

Seville is a city known for its rituals and festivals, and Holy Week is one of the biggest events of the year. Locals vie for the best spots on balconies overlooking the procession routes in the narrow streets below, where confraternity brothers process with life-size sculptures of the suffering Christ and the grieving Virgin. These processional sculptures unabashedly elicit a strong response from the viewer: Christ's bruised body and open wounds exhibit an artistic virtuosity and a morbid verisimilitude. Even after the ritual is over, Holy Week is never really out of sight in Seville. Calendars in shop windows count down the days until Palm Sunday, and haunting processional music floats through the night air as young boys practice marching and playing at the same time. Year-round and worldwide, official confraternity web pages invite visitors to view their cyberspace "photo galleries," proudly exhibiting color pictures of their Holy Week sculptures. Many of these images date back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Holy Week emerged as an important annual ritual event in Seville. The development of these processional sculptures and the ritual of Seville's Holy Week in the early modern era (1550–1700) are the subject of Susan Verdi Webster's *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain*.

Webster is an art historian, and she focuses her attention on the sculptures at the center of the Holy Week processions. She convincingly argues that the processional sculptures were key to the efficacy of the ritual, as they temporarily came to life in procession and forged a link between the human and the divine. Webster champions these sculptures, which have been ma-

ligned by art historians as overwrought, popular images until recently. The very source of the images' power—the verisimilar effect created by their false eyelashes, crystal tears, human-hair wigs, and sumptuous robes—has been the cause of their rejection as serious works of art. While the author of this work takes processional sculpture seriously, there is little formal analysis of particular images, and their iconographic treatment remains general. Instead, Webster is primarily concerned with the sculptures in their ritual context, and in the process she covers much ground on topics of wide interest, with discussions ranging from religious control in the theater to the integration of slaves and foreigners into Sevillian society.

Webster has crafted her book in a way that progressively assembles the many layers of the Holy Week ritual. She builds the foundation in Chapter 1, beginning with the confraternities that patronized the images. Webster treats the rise of penitential confraternities in Seville, compares them to their better-known Italian counterparts, and explores the relationship between the confraternities and Spain's secular and sacred authorities. Chapters 2 and 3 explain how the processional sculptures were commissioned and created and how the ritual processions were staged and produced. This book invites the reader behind the scenes to a privileged space rarely seen by the public. Webster literally takes the reader beneath the surface opulence of the sculptures, showing how the images were made and revealing the simple wooden frames that lie beneath the elaborate clothing of the Holy Week Virgins. Throughout these first chapters, the material is most evocative when Webster's archival research reveals the passionate competition and violent confrontation that Holy Week sculptures inspired among their pious protectors. For example, she presents a 1604 lawsuit that detailed a bloody melee that arose between the members of two rival confraternities, who were armed with staffs and flagellant whips, among more traditional weapons.

Webster's prose takes flight when she discusses ritual and public response in her final two chapters. Ritual has been a rich topic for early modern historians in recent years, with Italian cities like Venice and Florence receiving the most thorough treatment by American scholars. In the case of Seville, Webster describes a ritual that created a "tightly controlled and choreographed sensorial space" (190) that existed beyond the control of church and state. The processional sculptures at the center of Holy Week played an important role in Sevillian society; they provided visual models of behavior capable of impelling viewers to imitate Christ's humility and the Virgin's

pious suffering. "Activated" in procession, the sculptures "allowed the spectators, through their heightened emotional states, to perceive the presence of the divine in the image" (186). During this temporary ritual process, Webster suggests, the images might become divine in their own right, even if such beliefs were frowned upon in the post-Tridentine world.

Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain includes four appendices, mostly of interest to specialists. There are dozens of black and white photos, as well as a section of color plates. Since the small format of these illustrations cannot communicate the sumptuousness of the original objects and the richness of the ritual event, readers might turn to a large format, lavishly illustrated book about Holy Week for complementary images. Enrique Pareja López's three-volume *Sevilla Penitente* (Editorial Gever, 1995) is perhaps the richest photo gallery of Holy Week in print; the five-volumes of *Semana Santa*, edited by Manuel J. Gómez Lara and Jorge Jiménez Barrientos (Ediciones Alfar, 1990), present a less vivid but more complete set of images. Works on Seville's Holy Week were, until now, almost exclusively produced as part of the event itself and written by confraternity members and aficionados of the images. Webster's work is an attractive presentation of Holy Week as a subject for scholarly inquiry that takes popular imagery seriously and introduces previously unavailable materials to an English-language audience.

—AMANDA J. WUNDER
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Equal at the Creation: Sexism, Society, and Christian Thought. Edited by Joseph Martos and Pierre Hégy. University of Toronto Press, 1998, viii, 206 pages.

This collection of ten essays focuses on gender roles, sexism, and women's response to it in the history of the Christian Church. In the first chapter, "Gender Roles – Family & Culture," the editors define the concept of gender roles and the basis of sexism in religion. The following articles focus on different gender-related issues in historical periods: Mary Rose D'Angelo on the gender of origins of Christianity in Judaism and Hellenism; Kenneth B. Steinhauser on the images of women in Christian antiquity; Marie Anne Mayeski on the impact of scholasticism on the situation of women in the middle ages; William H. Swatos on Elizabeth I in Renaissance England; Ellen M. Leonard on the development of separate gender roles in modern Catholi-

cism; Wendy Fletcher-Marsh on the single anthropology in modern Protestantism; Gaile M. Pohlhaus on Christian marriage today; Molly T. Marshall on current ordination policies; and the concluding chapter again by the editors on the possibilities of abolishing sexism in Christianity.

The editors attribute gender roles to efficiency in social organization. They argue that gender roles are appropriate and nondiscriminatory if they are based on sex-related physical attributes or if they result in a balance of power and status between males and females (i.e., the gender roles of one group do not automatically give it higher status or more power than the other group). One wonders, however, whether it could not be argued that any form of gender roles is oppressive, because it forces people into prescribed roles based on their gender, even if these roles have the same status as the roles of the other gender. Unfortunately, the editors do not quite say what they mean by this statement.

What comes forth clearly in the editors' statement is that, whenever one sex dominates another in a culture, it is commonly not due to social efficiency, but functions as the symbolic exercise of power. Understood this way, patriarchy is the social expression of male power. The other authors in this collection all contend that Christianity has tended towards patriarchy and not matriarchy throughout its history. They all agree that this imbalance of power is contrary to the "Kingdom vision" of the "Jesus movement." The editors also point out that there do not appear to be any roles in a Christian community that are justly assigned purely on the basis of sex. They therefore conclude that each assignment of gender roles in Christianity is an instance of sexism. Thus, they seem to imply that all forms of gender roles (such as auxiliary roles for women in the church, or the denial of women's ordination) really have little to do with the Christian gospel and everything to do with power structures.

The underlying assumption functioning in many of the articles is the original thesis of Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza. In her book, *In Memory of Her: a Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, Schüssler-Fiorenza argues that the "Jesus movement" was egalitarian in structure and ideology, but that this egalitarian thrust was undermined as the church compromised more and more with the surrounding culture. The editors contend that the gospel of Jesus has been inspirational in egalitarian efforts among human relationships. One has to ask, however, if this is not too easy a conclusion. Although the editors admit that a number of passages in the New Testament "have been used" to promote female submission, they stress

that “many passages in the gospels and epistles promote mutual service and peer relationships” (196). Unfortunately, their hermeneutics is simply a selective use of the texts in support of their own argument. Their point is lost without a more sophisticated hermeneutic.

In spite of these hermeneutical weaknesses, the book achieves its goal to be a historical survey of the topic. As the editors say, this book is not meant to be a comprehensive examination of sexism in Christian history. It is a series of successive essays, each offering a window through which one can view certain static pictures of sexism in a particular historical setting. Each essay successfully introduces the reader to some very interesting points in Christian history, and stimulates further thought and reading on the subject. It would probably be too eclectic for the taste of a historical scholar, but it would make excellent reading for scholars in other fields of inquiry as well as lay people.

—RACHEL S. BAARD

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Philosophy, Science, and Theology of Mission in the 19th and 20th Centuries. A Missiological Encyclopedia, Part II: Missionary Theology. By Jan A. B. Jongeneel. Peter Lang GmbH, 1997, 428 pages.

Jongeneel's first volume of his *Encyclopedia* was published to critical acclaim in 1995. This second volume by the Professor of Mission at Utrecht University addresses the third part of his project: missionary theology. Jongeneel directs his encyclopedia at those researching in the fields of “philosophical, empirical, and theological studies of mission in the 19th and 20th centuries” (viii). However, it will appeal to many more beyond these fields, including systematic and practical theologians seeking an outline of the main threads that make up the vast field of mission studies today. Indeed, this work can be seen as a cogently argued case for systematic and practical theologians to understand the place of missions in their own work. For any researcher focusing on a particular area of mission studies, this work gives standard literature references and summaries of research history; it also provides sufficient information for a thorough grounding in areas that may be more peripheral to the focus of a particular project. In that sense, this is almost more of a handbook of missiology than an encyclopedia.

The first volume covered the philosophy and science of mission. The second volume picks up where the first left off and covers the theology of mission/missionary theology. The areas covered include spirituality, doctrine, morality, government, education, worship, preaching, pastoral care, service, and encounter (i.e., with other faith positions). Each section includes a general historical overview of research in the specific field, coupled with an etymological description of the terminology in use. Jongeneel then argues for the term he prefers. There follows more in-depth examination of each category. For example, his section on spirituality covers just about every term that has been used in the last two centuries to describe this area: ascetics, spirituality, devotion, meditation/contemplation, prayer, and life-style. Each subsection includes an extensive bibliography, and then concludes with a very useful chronology of the use of various terms that have been described. Of course, in describing each of these terms so thoroughly, the author is also further developing the whole area of mission studies.

Jongeneel goes further than simply describing historical trends in his field, however, and regularly points to the direction he feels mission studies ought to be taking. For example, on the subject of missionary spirituality he first of all describes the (minimal) existing efforts to research the interrelation and interaction between spirituality, asceticism, devotion, etc., and mission at home and abroad, pointing out that this study “has only just begun,” before going on to argue that whilst “the history of missionary spirituality, prayer, and asceticism has already been studied to some extent...the historiography of missionary ascetics as a foundational and independent discipline has not yet been analysed” (10–1). Or in his section on missionary homiletics, he argues for more research of missionary sermons in the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras (289). These are useful pointers to current gaps in mission studies.

Jongeneel’s very precise use of language (helped by his knowledge of French, Dutch, and particularly German vocabulary where the English is not clear enough), forms the basis of the subdivisions of his work. For example, his differentiation between “theology of mission” and “missionary theology,” terms which are so often treated as synonymous in mission studies, is given attention in the very early pages of this volume (9–10). Although he argues for an approach to the study of mission that is both deductive and normative-axiological (derived from theology and philosophy) as well as inductive and descriptive-empirical (derived from given historical occurrences), carrying this through in his work, there are doubtless those, particularly in the

English-speaking world where the two aspects have often been intermingled without much awareness of even doing so, who will find this differentiation difficult. It is to be hoped that this *Encyclopedia* (both volumes—the first having as its main focus the inductive, the second the deductive trends) will encourage more of this continental European thoroughness to permeate current mission studies elsewhere.

Jongeneel's review of relevant literature in all the major European and majority world languages is overwhelming, and is in itself a tool that few other reference books on this subject in the field can equal. He also tries, generally successfully, to bridge the gap between Roman Catholic and Protestant understandings of mission, integrating the developments in both of these major branches of the church to form an overall perspective that is often sadly lacking in mission studies generally as well as in other reference works on this topic. He recognises that this second volume of his work concentrates mainly on "internal Christian concerns," on the basis that although missionary theology has developed enormously over the last two centuries, it has done so "primarily and mainly as a discipline which concentrates upon internal Christian needs" (368). Rather than being overly concerned about this, however, Jongeneel immediately proceeds to outline a way to remedy this omission, arguing for greater inclusion of other religions and world-views in the development of missionary theology.

Jongeneel clearly approaches the subject from a position of faith, which may not be helpful to all readers. In particular, his conclusion which states that "[s]ecular philosophers and scientists lack...a religious and personal engagement in Christian mission and are, therefore, not involved in doing theological mission studies (with the exception of the—empirical—history of the theological mission studies)" (371), is, of course, stating his own position in an ongoing debate about the place of religious belief in mission, and indeed theological, studies.

The only real criticism of the volume by this reviewer relates to the formats used for the text, which, although an improvement on the first volume, make for somewhat tiring reading. However, the fact that this very minor detail is the only criticism of the book is an indication of its quality in all other areas. Overall this work, together with its companion first volume, can be highly recommended and deserves a place in the library of every researcher engaged in mission studies.

—MICHAEL MARTEN
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Many Voices, One God: Being Faithful in a Pluralistic World: A Festschrift in Honor of Shirley Guthrie. Edited by Walter Brueggemann and George W. Stroup. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

This festschrift takes as its theme the challenge of being Christian in a world in which religious and secular pluralism are no longer relegated to frontiers beyond Christendom but are facts of our daily life, not only in who our neighbors are but in our own thoughts as Christians. Many of the contributions have a specifically Reformed emphasis, in keeping with Shirley Guthrie's over 40 years of service as an ordained Presbyterian minister and professor of theology at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. The overall note of the essays is hopeful: that the loss of Christendom is not a death knell to the Reformed tradition or to the church in general.

The book is divided into five sections: "Biblical Resources," "Christian Faith and Culture," "The Church and Pluralism," "Theological Reinterpretation," and "Practical Implications." The section on biblical materials starts with Walter Brueggemann's interpretation of Amos as offering an alternative to an ideological reading of Deuteronomistic Yahwism, whereby Israel arrogates to itself a self-description as the *only* chosen people parallel to Yahweh's status as the only God. Amos challenges this reading by asserting that Yahweh also brought the Ethiopians and Philistines out of captivity. Brueggemann interprets this passage as implying that Christians should recognize God as hearing the cries of the oppressed wherever they are, Christian or not. Will Coleman believes that Christians are called to exercise powers of vision parallel to Daniel's by bringing hope and direction where the culture sees primarily fear and fragmentation. Biblical narratives of God's love as casting out fear should help us in this task. Charles Cousar challenges Daniel Boyarin's reading of Paul as someone so struck by the vision of God's universal love that he wanted to eliminate the particularity of the Jewish people. On the contrary, Paul allowed Jew and Gentile to maintain their identity within the Christian community; their particular ethnic identities were subsumed in the saving love of Christ.

In the second section, Douglas John Hall and Donald McKim offer somewhat contrasting interpretations of the church's place in a pluralistic culture. Hall asserts that being a minority is the normal situation of Christians according to the biblical witness; hence there should be no laments over the loss of Christendom. He faults the common categorization of theologies of

religions into exclusivism, pluralism, and inclusivism as staying at the abstract intellectual level and not reaching down to the concrete, confessional level where faith in Jesus Christ—the scandal of the gospel—is lived. However, he does not develop a proposal as to how to relate his contextual confessionalism to philosophical or theological claims of universality. McKim is more willing to make abstract claims. He uses Karl Barth's doctrine of election to show that the Reformed tradition does not rule out salvation for those of other religions, and reminds us that the Holy Spirit is not bound to the work of the visible church.

The third section focuses on creative uses of church history. Catherine Gunsalus González points out that early formulations, later consolidated into the Apostles' Creed, permitted local variations in theology and practice. She thinks that a similar unity permitting diversity is called for today, as an alternative to fundamentalist belief systems that anathematize everything outside the extensive system, or a *laissez-faire* approach that makes no demands or claims on anyone. C. Benton Kline looks at interpretations of catholicity across the sweep of history of doctrine and finds that it has been generally interpreted to imply a quest for universality and continuity with the whole church. Since this striving is not yet complete, Kline prefers the phrase "centering diversity" over Avery Dulles's "reconciled diversity" to describe catholicity. Amy Plantinga Pauw explores two prominent feminine images for the church, focusing on the career of Jonathan Edwards. "Mother" imagery is used when one wants to talk about the messy work of nurturing weak and sinful believers, while "bride" imagery is used when one wants to talk about the sanctified church that is to be presented spotless before its Lord. Plantinga Pauw notes that a sudden change in Edwards's own imagery parallels a crackdown on laxity that cost him his pulpit in Northampton. She states that the church is called to be both a nurturer of the weak and striver for sanctification, while noting that both images are problematic if they are used to reinforce predominantly male images of God.

The section on theological reinterpretations discusses the doctrines of sin, atonement, and the Holy Spirit. Daniel Migliore points out that Barth's doctrine of sin is a more productive dialogue partner with feminist theologies than his doctrine of woman as equal in status but second in order to man would suggest. Barth's three-part doctrine of sin as pride, sloth, and falsehood can include the sins of self-abnegation, co-dependency, or persistence that are described as common female sins in the work of Valerie Saiving,

Judith Plaskow, and Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel. William Placher presents these three atonement metaphors as complementary ways to describe a mystery that is beyond our complete explanation. By themselves, talk about God's solidarity with us might indicate God's being with us but not our being able to rise above the world of sin and corruption; talk about reconciliation might imply that God was our enemy before God sent Jesus Christ; and talk about redemption might give evil forces too much ontological weight. Intertwined, however, each reveals a facet of the mystery. George Stroup proposes that the Western churches reinterpret the *filioque* clause in such a way that Christ is seen to be filled with the Spirit, but also that the Spirit sends Christ. He thinks that an emphasis on the free work of the Spirit is a more productive way to conduct interfaith dialogue than reconstructing Christology.

Finally, in the section on practical theology, Marcia Riggs advocates a liberative ethic. She thinks that the trio of teleology, deontology, and responsibility must be augmented by a particular focus on the oppressed and on the processes of consensus in diversity that can make community life go forward. Brian Childs points out some of the differences between how doctrinal and pastoral theologians approach their task. Childs believes that pastoral theologians must be more attuned to particularities of people's experience than most doctrinal theologians—including the sympathetic Shirley Guthrie—have heretofore been.

In sum, this is an excellent collection of essays which will probably expose any reader to something new, given the breadth in its selection of disciplines. Its overall drift is "postmodern" in the sense of epistemic humility about absolutes, but the authors do not want to give up the claim that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. It deserves a wide readership.

—VIRGINIA W. LANDGRAF
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CONTRIBUTORS

RICHARD J. BAUTCH is a doctoral candidate in Hebrew Bible at the University of Notre Dame. Currently, he is writing a dissertation on the communal, penitential prayer of the post-exilic community in Jerusalem during the fifth century BCE. His research and interests extend to the Byzantine Period, with attention to the monastic life of this time. Additionally, he teaches a course on the biblical and historical foundations of theology at Notre Dame.

TOMÁŠ HANČIL is a doctoral candidate in the Philosophy of Religion program at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is currently teaching at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. His interests lie in the field of rationality, specifically the question of the relationship between science and religion.

GALEN JOHNSON is a Ph.D. student in church history at Baylor University, Waco, Texas. He has a B. A. in Religion from Wake Forest University (1992) and an M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary (1995). His field of interest lies in Reformation and Puritan thought, with a projected dissertation on conscience and individualism in the writings of John Bunyan.

SCOTT R. PAETH is a third-year Ph.D. candidate in the Christian Ethics program at Princeton Theological Seminary. His work focuses on the interrelationship of Christian theology and social ethics, with special attention to the ethical implications of Jürgen Moltmann's work.

JAMES F. THOMAS is a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate in the Mission, Ecumenics, and History of Religions program at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is an expert in Theravada Buddhism and is currently writing a dissertation on the evolving dialogue between Buddhists and Christians, which has been precipitated by the AIDS crisis in Thailand. He is particularly interested in questions of inter-religious contacts and inter-culturality as they relate to Christian social ethics and the history of Christian mission.

Call For Papers

KOINONIA JOURNAL is currently seeking papers exploring emerging areas of interest in the study of religion that are likely to foster interdisciplinary dialogue.

KOINONIA, a journal published twice a year by doctoral students under the auspices of Princeton Theological Seminary, invites doctoral students currently enrolled in accredited programs to submit papers to be considered for publication. *KOINONIA* is indexed in *Religion Index One* and is carried by over 95 institutional libraries.

Articles. The fall issue of the journal is an open issue containing four or five essays. Papers on all topics will be considered based on their relevance for religious studies and potential for interdisciplinary dialogue. *KOINONIA* welcomes submissions for the fall issue throughout the year. **The deadline for each open issue is March 31.** The editorial board of *KOINONIA* also hosts an annual forum at Princeton Theological Seminary. The editors select a central essay for the annual forum on the basis of its relevance for doctoral students in the study of religion and potential for interdisciplinary dialogue. Both the central essay and several responses are presented at the forum and subsequently published in the spring issue. The topic of each year's forum is announced in a separate Call for Papers. **The deadline for papers to be considered for the Fall Forum is March 31.**

Book Reviews. Each issue of *KOINONIA* contains about a dozen critical reviews of important, recently published books in religious studies. We welcome unsolicited reviews of approximately one thousand words in length. Students interested in reviewing books for *KOINONIA* should contact the executive editor.

Submission Specifications. Submitted essays should be original, unpublished work. All submissions are reviewed by an editorial board comprised of doctoral students representing different areas of religious and theological studies. Full manuscripts are required. Style specifications are available by request or may be downloaded from our website at www.ptsem.edu/koinonia. Submissions should be sent to *KOINONIA JOURNAL* at the address below or as an e-mail attachment to KOINONIA@PTSEM.EDU.

Correspondence and submissions should be addressed to:

KOINONIA JOURNAL
Princeton Theological Seminary
P.O. Box 821
Princeton, NJ 08542-0803

Christopher Rogers, Executive Editor
christopher.rogers@ptsem.edu
Scott Paeth, Production Editor
scott.paeth@ptsem.edu

Electronic version: <http://www.ptsem.edu/koinonia>

Annual subscription	\$16.00
Student price	\$8.00
Institution price	\$24.00

Typography: Scott Paeth

KOINOINA JOURNAL
Princeton Theological Seminary
P.O. Box 821
Princeton, NJ 08542

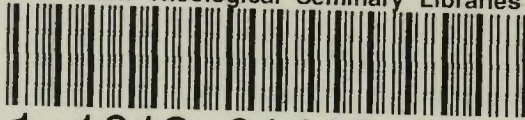
Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 190
Princeton, NJ 08542

9790 TE 507
10-18-01 32180 XL



FOR USE IN LIBRARY ONLY.

Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01445 5481

FOR USE IN LIBRARY ONLY.

